

THE PROJECTION OF BRITAIN'S  
'NEW EMPIRE' IN AFRICA, 1939-48

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## ABSTRACT

The situation faced by the British Government during the Second World War demanded a total effort to fight a total war. And a cooperative effort was demanded not only by Britain and her allies, but equally of Britain in partnership with her empire. The importance of Britain's empire to her war effort meant that the British Government had to ensure unity of purpose and the mobilisation of maximum commitment. British colonies in East and Central Africa became increasingly important in supplying raw materials, food stuffs, monetary contributions and manpower. With advances in mass communications public opinion could not be ignored and had to be mobilised to support the war effort at home, in the colonies and abroad. This involved the British Government in a propaganda campaign about the mutually beneficial relationship, to explain the war to the populations in the empire and to educate the British public about the contributions made by the empire to the war effort. A reluctant Colonial Office entered into a new field of activity, public relations in uneasy cooperation with the Ministry of Information. The nature of this official British propaganda changed as the war progressed. In Africa it became increasingly apparent that 'win the war' propaganda was insufficient, the colonies would have to be told why they had a common interest in defeating the Axis. With the collapse of British power in South-East Asia and the resulting criticisms of the British Imperial system in general, particularly from the United States, it was clear that British policy would have to be articulated in a new way. The theme adopted was of a new imperial relationship of 'partnership' to replace the old policy of trusteeship. In publicising the positive economic and social aspects of 'new' Empire through the commitment of the Colonial Welfare and Development Acts the British Government hoped to reduce criticism and avoid the controversial issues of the future political developments in the empire.

In the post-war period the economic problems faced by the Labour Government and the need to mobilise the resources of the Empire to support the British economy threatened the rhetoric of the 'new' Empire relationship of

'partnership' as attempts were made to utilise the resources of the African El Dorado to maintain British independence and ensure its continued great power status. The colonies in Africa were also seen as under threat from the new menace of communism and the racial policies of the Union of South Africa. Official British propaganda continued to project the mutual benefits of 'partnership' while realising that the colonies could not be coerced but would have to be persuaded to play an active part in the imperial relationship. This long-term educative process aimed to contain the political aspirations of the Africans and the white settler communities in East and Central Africa raised as a result of the war within the framework of gradual evolution towards self-government within the British multi-racial Commonwealth.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABCA	Army Bureau of Current Affairs
ADC	Aide-de-Camp
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEA	British East Africa
BFI	British Film Institute
BIS	British Information Services
BW	British Council
CDC	Colonial Development Corporation
CEMB	Colonial Empire Marketing Board
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CNNA	Council for National Academic Awards
CO	Colonial Office
COI	Central Office of Information
Cons.	Conservative Party
COVIC	Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee
DG	Director General of the MOI
DDG	Deputy Director General of the MOI
EAGC	East African Governors' Conference
EMB	Empire Marketing Board
FCB	Fabian Colonial Bureau
FO	Foreign Office
FOND	Foreign Office News Department
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GPO	General Post Office
H.M.	Her/His Majesty
HMG	Her/His Majesty's Government
IO	Information Officer
KAR	King's African Rifles
Lab.	Labour Party
Lib.	Liberal Party

MOI	Ministry of Information
MP	Member of Parliament
Nat. Lab.	National Labour Party
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OAG	Officer Administering the Government
ODC	Overseas Development Corporation
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OEPEC	Overseas Emergency Publicity Expenditure Committee
OFC	Overseas Food Corporation
Parl.	Parliamentary
PIO	Principal Information Officer
PM	Prime Minister
PRO	Public Record Office
RIO	Regional Information Officer
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
T	Treasury
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TUC	Trade Union Council
UAC	United Africa Company
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAC	BBC Written Archives Centre
WEA	Workers' Education Authority
WO	War Office

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to examine the story of Britain's intended 'new' empire in Africa by tracing the development of the intertwining of policy and propaganda represented in this new imperial structure. By examining the 'new' empire, defined as a consensual 'partnership' between the colonial peoples and the mother country, a better general understanding of this period of imperial history was sought.

Why would an examination of the voluminous official material generated by the conduct of 'public relations' be expected to make anything but a marginal addition to our understanding of British colonial policy? In the case of the 'old' empire that would indeed have been the case. The 'old' empire was based on the idea of 'benevolent trusteeship'. The people of the colonies were governed by Britain in their - and Britain's - best interests whether they liked it or not, or saw their own best interests in the same light. Articulation or projection of the reasons for the policies imposed on them and of the benefits they were designed to produce was at best a marginal task. There was always military force to quell any expression of disaffection. The idea of 'new' empire however was to make those reasons and benefits explicit and to persuade the people that being in an empire of 'partnership' was in their best interests and that they should voluntarily remain a part of it. 'Public relations' became therefore a central rather than a marginal component of policy, indicated by the vastly greater volume of records generated, as well as the much higher level of the officials and political figures whose views appear in them.

The cynic might say that the 'new' empire was simply an attempt to substitute propaganda for the military force which Britain could no longer afford to deploy in order to continue her dominion over vast areas of Africa and the exploitation of its resources for the benefit of her own declining economy. That would be a gross oversimplification. It ignores the belief, sincerely held, that it was in the African peoples' own interests to be a part of a large, stable and rich empire instead of being



part of a poor and underdeveloped entity. It would also ignore the willingness to commit British resources into the creation of viable territories through the development of the African colonies (as distinct from merely investing in developments of direct benefit to Britain) despite Britain's grave economic position at the time. Whatever the balance between these views may be, the fact remains that public relations was a key element in the plans and policies for developing the 'new' empire and that without exploring the records of these propaganda activities the story cannot be fully understood.

There is also another reason why these records are useful. The idea of a consensus based colonial empire meant that policy and propaganda had to develop together. Matters of policy had to be considered in terms of their presentation and perception. Above all, it meant that policy objectives were articulated and recorded to a greater extent than ever before. It is a rich and revealing body of sources which helps shed light on how events and problems were seen as well as how they were intended to be seen.

At the time of planning this study, the prevailing view amongst writers on post-war British colonial policy was that the concept of a 'new' empire based on new ideas of economic cooperation and political 'partnership' rather than direct (or indirect) rule of old, evolved at the end of the war under the stimulus of the Labour Party coming into power. It was rather taken for granted that reconstructing the empire must have been a part of that general enthusiasm and drive for 'social reconstruction' which had brought Labour into power in the first place and which was the hallmark of the Labour government period. Accordingly, it had originally been envisaged that in telling the story from 'new' empire to 'winds of change', from the emergence of the new ideas, policies and techniques of persuasion represented by the former, to the reluctant acceptance that maintaining the Africa empire in whatever form was no longer feasible represented by the latter, the thesis would cover the period 1945-1960.

Research into the origins of both the shift in

policy/ideas and the means by which they were realised in Africa had however shown that linking reconstruction at home and in the empire was in fact not merely an oversimplification but - to echo von Ranke's famous phrase - it was just not 'how it really happened'. A very substantial body of evidence, hitherto unexplored, came to light which conclusively documents that it was in fact during the war, principally between 1939-1943, that this far-reaching shift in thinking about the nature of the imperial relationship occurred. It also showed that it occurred spontaneously within the Colonial Office and that shifting the emphasis from administrative and military methods onto persuasion, as well as the development and use of such techniques was also well under way before the change of government in 1945. It is true that in broad philosophical terms these ideas of a partnership of peoples as well as economic coordination and cooperation echoed Labour's rhetoric and indeed deeply held beliefs. However the Colonial Office drew their inspiration from that common core of ideas which had become intellectually prevalent during the war and which made for the consensus politics of the next two decades. These changes in approach, policy and methods represented by the 'new' empire were not in fact a concomitant of Labour coming to power. On the contrary, the new ideas and new policies were already in place by 1943.

The emergence of these new ideas and policies amongst the normally staid and conservative officials of the Colonial Office in London and of the Colonial Service in the colonies was in fact the result of their experience of the war itself, made urgent during the disastrous period from Dunkirk to the loss of Singapore and much of the eastern empire with it and which Churchill dubbed 'the beginning'. The Colonial Office came to realise and then came face to face with the fact, that Britain would not again have the power and the British public would not again have the inclination, to maintain its imperial position by coercion. A colonial empire could only be maintained from now on in a modified form which substantially relied on the consent of its peoples, both at home and in the colonies.

This consent would have to be gained by active propaganda and public relations instead of relying on ex post facto acquiescence. Active propaganda and public relations would need to be started as early as possible in preparation for the transition to the post-war period.

Despite therefore the assumption that the British government and officials would have been fully engaged during the war in simply trying to hold onto what they had rather than plan a new imperial strategy altogether, it was in fact during the war that the major transformation in ideas about the relationship between the rulers and the ruled took place. It was during, rather than after, the war that the concepts of a 'new' empire and of a partnership replacing the old empire and benevolent trusteeship evolved. This policy was merely continued in the post-war years. Even the ideas of multi-racial partnership, instead of seeing partnership in terms of the white settlers living off the African territories, which has been thought to have evolved in the 1950s in response to developments in East and Central Africa, had in fact already been formulated as a concept before 1945.

Another new aspect emerged from the research. The loss of faith in the feasibility of creating such a new empire in Africa also occurred earlier than it had been generally assumed. Instead of the mid-to-late 1950s it was in the course of 1948 that it came to be recognised within the Colonial Office that the dream of the new empire was not going to be realised. The strain on Britain's financial resources and the economic crises of 1947-8 increasingly ruled out the level of support and investment which might have possibly made it work. The practical manifestation of partnership was no longer Britain's commitment to develop the African colonies for the benefit of the colonial peoples but economic development as a means of British economic regeneration. The further drain on British military, political and financial resources which the Palestine crisis and then the Cold War brought combined with meeting in 1948 for the first time African nationalism on a significant scale, turned the era of hope and optimism which had characterised Colonial Office thinking up to that



point into a period of a 'race against time'. The year 1948 also marks the end of any new developments in colonial propaganda. From seeking to create a 'new' empire, policy shifted by 1948 to what had become in reality a holding operation. With the failure of the 'new' empire withdrawal from Africa became only a matter of time.

The chronological framework therefore for the story of the emergence and failure of Britain's 'new' empire in Africa, and in which persuasion would play the central role, turned out to be not in the post-war period, but the years between 1939 and 1948.

While the change in the concept and the projection of empire had implications for Britain's imperial policy in general, East and Central Africa are of particular importance because it was in these territories above all that Britain expected that the concept of 'new' empire - a three-way partnership between Britain, white/British settler communities and 'natives' would both require and provide the opportunity for such a 'partnership' for an especially long period thus providing the basis for a long-lasting imperial structure. It was in East and Central Africa in particular where the 'new' empire would come into being, would operate most successfully and would perhaps become a model for other territories. Concentrating on the projection of the 'new' empire in East and Central Africa offers therefore an eminently relevant locational focus as well as the opportunity for considering it in this wider context.

This study focuses on direct and indirect official governmental propaganda and the relationship between policy-making and its projection; the 'calculated intent'<sup>1</sup> behind the propaganda produced by the imperial publicists. Emphasis is placed on the 'metropolitan' view for it was in London that the dynamic for change can be located, where the requirements of wartime mobilisation in the colonial empire produced new habits of central direction, where the

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<sup>1</sup> Philip M. Taylor, The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda 1919-1939 (Cambridge, 1981), p.1



debates on the 'new' empire took place, where the 'partnership' doctrine was adopted and where the new and major propaganda initiatives were born. Accordingly, relations between the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Information (hereafter MOI) will be explored together with relations with quasi and unofficial organisations like the BBC and the British Council. But this is not to suggest a purely centre-periphery model with all the initiative emanating from London. Relations between Whitehall and the men on the spot were more complicated than that. The way in which propaganda objectives were translated by those on the spot to suit perceived local needs, as well as local initiatives taken and local criticisms of metropolitan policies fed back into policy making in London will be examined. Unlike other studies produced in the imperial propaganda field<sup>2</sup> the popular imagery and manifestations of the empire are only discussed when there were official attempts to mould it.

The audiences for British propaganda about her colonies in East and Central Africa were not limited to the populations of these colonies, black and white Africans. As the war progressed increasing attention was shown in projecting the British empire to the British public and promoting an educated public opinion about the empire and also the audience with the most potentially damaging influence, the United States.

The argument of the thesis may be summarised as follows. The role of official British propaganda about her African colonies remained relatively simple until 1942. Before 1939 the Colonial Office had been active in the specific area of commercial propaganda and had been slow to recognise that it was necessary to engage in public relations and 'sell' their policies to the public, therefore little publicity machinery to project Britain's colonial policy existed once war broke out. Early wartime efforts concentrated on getting a publicity organisation up

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<sup>2</sup> C.f. John M. MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire: the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960 (Manchester, 1988) and his edited collection, Imperialism and Popular Culture (Manchester, 1986).

and running and propaganda was initially conducted on an ad hoc basis by the Empire Division of the MOI, advised by the Colonial Office. Debate centred on discussions about the nature of propaganda about Africa and the most effective methods of projection. Against a background of continual quarrels over the control of and responsibility for the content of colonial propaganda efforts were made to establish improved cooperation between on the one hand, the MOI and the Colonial Office, and on the other hand between Whitehall and the colonies themselves. The propaganda effort about the empire was further hampered by the practical considerations not only of a lack of manpower but also financial constraints and the competing priorities of Britain's propaganda effort in general.

Between 1939 and 1942 the British war effort concentrated on survival. Therefore propaganda reflected this overriding objective and was limited to exhorting Africans to maximise their contributions to the Allied war effort in a common fight against tyranny, to explaining the war to Africans in order to maintain morale, to reinforcing the belief that Britain could and should win the war and to ensuring that the colonial war effort was articulated and understood in Britain and abroad. Despite Colonial Office warnings about the dangers of limiting propaganda to this 'win the war' theme, propaganda in the early stages of the war was subordinated to the overwhelming need to maximise the war effort in the colonies. In this task of making the African colonies believe that they were engaged in a common struggle, propagandists were aided by the Abyssinian campaigns on their doorstep which involved African troops from the region.

The fall of Singapore and the failure of Malaya to rally to the British cause against Japan sent shock waves throughout the imperial system. 'The myth of colonial invincibility was destroyed, and the self-confidence of the colonial powers and administrators who sustained this myth dissipated. The colonial emperor had no clothes'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Crowder (ed.), Cambridge Modern History of Africa, Volume 8, 1940-75 (Cambridge, 1985), p.2.

Britain was forced to come to terms with the fact that the support of their colonial peoples could no longer be taken for granted. This new factor in policy planning remained important ever after. It was no longer sufficient to represent the war in terms of a straight fight between right and wrong and unrelated to the aspirations and experiences of people living far away from theatres of war. There was also a growing realisation that the British public had to be stimulated into a greater interest in the colonial empire as a whole. The entrance of the United States of America into the war, which guaranteed victory, also raised acutely questions about what kind of world the Allies were fighting for. Indeed there were real fears that the United States might make the liquidation of the British empire a condition of American support. This prompted one exasperated official to ask when the United States would start to fight the real enemy and stop barracking Britain about her colonial policy: 'it is unfortunate that our American friends cannot find a more war-like occupation than their badgering the British lion'.<sup>4</sup>

A new colonial mission was needed: a new policy which would counteract despondency that the British empire's days were numbered. The propagandists also had to come to terms with the new realities after 1942 and find a more acceptable way of articulating British colonial policy to the Americans, while also guarding against war weariness and complacency about eventual victory and promoting continued empire unity. The solution to this combined policy and propaganda problem was found in presenting the colonial relationship in a new light which reflected the Colonial Office's belief 'in the ability of the administrative structure to "prepare" a colony for social, economic, and even political progress'.<sup>5</sup> At Churchill's

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<sup>4</sup> PRO, C0875/19/6, Colonial Office minute, 1 December 1943.

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Lee, '"Forward Thinking" and War: the Colonial Office During the 1940s', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 6:1 (1977), p.72.



behest the general discussion of war aims was forbidden in government propaganda. The Colonial Office was also determined that they would not be forced by American public opinion into committing themselves publicly to constitutional reforms which would establish a timetable for the African colonies on the path to self-government and independence. The new theme of a dynamic 'partnership' between Britain and her colonial empire, with an implication that this was to be a partnership between equals and not the old principle of 'trusteeship' with its connotations of charitable paternalism, allowed however a commitment to responsible independent government for the African colonies to be avoided. From 1943 onwards as thought and planning turned towards post-war reconstruction, British propaganda was increasingly devoted to how this new empire based on partnership would develop by projecting not just general hints about 'constitutional' advances but promises of practical manifestation in welfare and development projects for the colonies. The propagandists were aided in this task by the fillip provided by the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 which gave the colonies 120 million pounds over 10 years. This commitment provided the substance to back up propaganda and was the high water mark of the policy of 'new' empire.

As the war progressed and once cooperation between the MOI and the Colonial Office had improved after 1942 the imperial propaganda effort became technically more sophisticated. It relied less and less on standard material produced for general audiences and became more specialised, especially prepared to meet the local needs of each individual colony. Unrest and colonial disturbances did not feature in wartime colonial propaganda. The image of the empire was to be positive, nothing was to deflect from an image of total effort and a cooperative partnership. In the post-war period the projection of the British empire continued as an empire of 'partnership'. Britain's commitment to this new mission in Africa in the post-war period was also of great psychological importance to a weakened Britain after the Second World War. After



the loss of India, the jewel in the imperial crown, it would symbolise the continuance of Britain's great power status and prestige. Although it was realised that the war had aroused African expectations, British expectations of a continued long-term role in Africa were strong. Indeed, Britain looked to their African 'partners' to help them out of the post-war economic quagmire as the major support area of the British empire providing manpower and raw materials.

From 1948 however, the gap between expectations and reality grew even wider. At home, the total and extremely public failure of the East African Groundnuts Scheme exposed how unreal had been the expectation that Africa could provide a panacea for Britain's economic ills. In Africa, however much Ernest Bevin<sup>6</sup>, the Labour Foreign Secretary, liked to claim that the British were no longer 'imperialists' having abandoned capitalist imperialism, the gap between the rhetoric of 'partnership' and the realities of the Labour government's development policies based on 'enlightened self-interest'<sup>7</sup> became all too clear. It became increasingly evident for all to see that Britain was and likely to be obliged in the foreseeable future to derive far more from her African colonies than they could hope to receive in return. It was clear to those responsible for the colonial publicity that propaganda, without at least the minimum of substance to back it up, would be bound to fail in the long-run.

The development and the demise of the idea of the 'new' empire and the role of propaganda in it has only been the subject of two previous studies. Martin Petter and J.M. Lee examined its origins and development during the war. They concluded that the overriding impetus came from the need in the desperate circumstances of 1941-2 to everything possible to avoid antagonising American public opinion and to find a way to counter its habitual hostility

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<sup>6</sup> Hereafter an asterisk \* after an individual's name denotes an entry in Appendix 1: the Biographical Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Howe, Anticolonialism in British Politics: the Left and the End of Empire, 1918-1964 (Oxford, 1993), p.144.

to the British empire.<sup>8</sup> Whereas this study has confirmed that this consideration indeed played a part, there were in fact several other considerations, both long-term and short-term, which played an important role in its genesis. First, a culmination of efforts within the Colonial Office to be more pro-active in the area of propaganda, the origins of which can be dated back to the pre-Second World War period. Second, the realisation that the philosophy of trusteeship was tired and a 'new' colonial mission was needed which would reflect the principles of the new development philosophy of the Colonial Office epitomised by the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. And third, a reaction against what was perceived by the Colonial Office as the attempts by the 'amateurs' within the MOI to take sole control of the projection of the British empire thus cutting across responsibilities which were the preserve of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Rosaleen Smyth has examined colonial propaganda in Northern Rhodesia in her thesis 'The Development of Government Propaganda in Northern Rhodesia up to 1953' and explored subsequently some broader aspects of propaganda in Africa in a number of articles.<sup>9</sup> She argued in her thesis that propaganda aimed at the 'socialisation of African peoples into Western technological society' and examined the contribution made by government propaganda to the 'awakening of African political consciousness and the formation of an African public opinion'.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the focus of Rosaleen Smyth's research this thesis is concerned

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<sup>8</sup> J.M. Lee and Martin Petter, The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939-1945, (London, 1982), pp.115-143.

<sup>9</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, 'The Development of Government Propaganda in Northern Rhodesia up to 1953', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1983; 'War Propaganda during the Second World War in Northern Rhodesia', African Affairs, 83:332, 1984 and 'Britain's African Colonies and British Propaganda during the Second World War', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 14:1, October 1985.

<sup>10</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, 'The Development of Government propaganda in Northern Rhodesia up to 1953', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1983, pp.387 and 19.

centrally with the development of the metropolitan view of public relations and its function in relation colonial policy in general, with what it reveals about the attitudes of official mind towards the imperial relationship and perceptions of British imperial power, with how this policy was carried through in East and Central Africa and with how the Colonial Office hoped to avoid the creation of nationalist forces which Smyth argued were the inevitable consequence of engaging in such government propaganda. It may well be that the 'transfer of power' in Africa was hastened by the war experience of which propaganda was a part but it is important to acknowledge that an extraordinary effort was made to mould this 'inevitability' into a relationship the British could live with, derive power from and continue to benefit from, a 'new' empire: a partnership for progress.



## CHAPTER ONE

THE COLONIAL OFFICE AND  
CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC RELATIONS<sup>1</sup>

In 1956 the recently retired Deputy Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Charles Jeffries\*, in his book The Colonial Office devoted a chapter to the Colonial Office's Information Services which he described as 'A Modern Necessity'. He wrote:

Information work in the Colonial Office has a double purpose. One side of it is to tell people outside the territories about the territories; the other is to tell people in the territories about the world outside. The interests of the territories are deeply involved in both sides of the work. It is important to these places that public opinion in the United Kingdom and other countries should be well informed about them; it is also important to them that their own peoples should be well informed about world affairs and especially about the aims and policies of the United Kingdom. It is important, too, to the United Kingdom that the peoples of the territories should understand and support British policy, and that other countries should have an accurate appreciation of what the British have achieved and are trying to achieve in the colonial field.<sup>2</sup>

He argued further that the Colonial Office 'would be failing in its duty if it did not take some trouble to supply these needs'.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, Sir John Shuckburgh\*, former Deputy Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1931-42, in his unpublished Colonial Civil History of the War described inter alia the growth of public relations activities in the Colonial Office in a matter-of-fact manner. His survey was

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the terms 'information', 'propaganda', 'publicity' and 'public relations' will be used interchangeably because they were at the time unless specified during discussions over what kind of projection the Colonial Office was/should be involved in. At times the Colonial Office could feel more comfortable in the thought they were active in the field of 'commercial information' in the pre-Second World War period or in advocating the use of 'public relations' in the sense of promoting a positive and favourable image of British colonial policy, a long-term aim which could be and was differentiated from the MOI's short-term war 'propaganda'.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Jeffries, The Colonial Office, (London, 1956), p.182.

<sup>3</sup> ibid.



limited to detailing the progress made in public relations during the war. He wrote about the expansion in publicity staff. He claimed there had been 'the closest possible rapport' between the Colonial Office and the MOI and that there had been a general acceptance of the view that public relations 'could play a valuable part in Colonial administration and development'.<sup>4</sup> In both accounts the inter-war internal Colonial Office debate concerning fundamental questions about the role and nature of public relations, propaganda, publicity and information policy, a debate which intensified under wartime conditions, is not acknowledged.<sup>5</sup> Although the Colonial Office adopted a more pro-active position on the question of public relations and propaganda with the appointment of Noel Sabine as the first Colonial Office Public Relations Officer in July 1940 the long-time sceptics remained unconvinced that 'information services' were indeed 'a modern necessity'.

In the first place after the First World War the debate over public relations questioned the desirability of the Colonial Office being involved in the scurrilous activity of 'self-advertisement' which was seen by many as largely unacceptable in peacetime. Propaganda had become a pejorative word. It was generally thought in the Colonial Office that propaganda activity was best left to unofficial and quasi-official bodies like the Imperial Institute and the BBC. The propaganda officially embarked upon in the inter-war years was primarily of a commercial nature, supporting empire produce and promoting the theme of imperial self-sufficiency through organisations like the Empire Marketing Board and later the Colonial Empire Marketing Board. Because of its limited, practical nature, this was more 'acceptable' within the Colonial Office and was justifiable because British economic policy between the wars was dominated by the need to promote economic

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<sup>4</sup> Sir John Shuckburgh, Colonial Civil History of the War, Volume 4, Part VI, (unpublished manuscript, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London), pp.177, 180 and 200.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps not so surprising in the case of Shuckburgh's account as it was designed for official publication.

stability as 'a fourth arm of defence ... without which purely military efforts would be of no avail'.<sup>6</sup> In spite of these forays in the area of official propaganda, the temptation to draw the conclusion that the Colonial Office had accepted the value of regularly engaging in official propaganda should be avoided; the majority view was that it was an unnecessary activity which could only be justified if it brought increased wealth to the colonies and to Britain by way of commercial publicity. Little attention was given to the possible benefits of projecting the idea of empire for its own sake. With the approach of war, the challenge posed by the totalitarian powers and the higher profile colonial affairs received, the Colonial Office came to the reluctant conclusion that 'propaganda' was an activity which had more than commercial applications and that 'prestige' propaganda was needed to answer critics at home and abroad although little action was taken to carry this conclusion forward. During the war those advocating a positive attitude towards propaganda and the establishment of a Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office were provided with four factors in support of their cause. First, the encroachment by the Empire Division of the MOI into the Secretary of State for the Colonies' responsibility for control of imperial propaganda. Second, the experience of handling the thorny problem of the Report of the Royal Commission on the West Indies while at the same time introducing Colonial Development and Welfare Legislation in early 1940. Third, the humiliating impact of the reversals in South East Asia and fourth, American public interventions in questions of imperial policy. The combination of these factors meant that not only a more resolute defence of empire was required, but the articulation of a new and positive colonial mission. Towards the end of the war, as thinking turned towards the post-war period the debate moved on. Imperial propaganda in time of war was one thing but imperial propaganda when

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<sup>6</sup> George Peden, 'A Matter of Timing: the Economic background to British Foreign Policy 1937-1939', History, 1984, p.16.

peace returned was quite another. The last debate fought and won was for the permanent place of public relations in the activities of the Colonial Office and the Colonial Service.

The debate also raises other important issues about imperial policy and questions of responsibility. The debate revealed the existence of important fundamental differences of opinion about the relationship between the governed and the governing and to what extent this was a two-way process or a top-downward one at a time when the new policy of colonial development and welfare had been launched with its implications for a greater governmental role in the future of the colonial empire. This had important implications for colonial audiences and the idea of rule by consent. Not least it was important in terms of educating the British public, the tax-payer, on whom in the final analysis the ability to keep the imperial show on the road depended. Should the British public be educated about the nature and purpose of Britain's trust and responsibilities in an era when increasing calls would be made to support the colonies financially? Finally, the debate on public relations had tremendous significance for Britain's colonial position in Africa as Africa was the one area in which the Colonial Office anticipated a long-term British role and where there was a possible opportunity to mould future political developments. Moreover, the discussions over public relations, particularly in the post-war period were seen almost exclusively in terms of the empire in Africa.

The projection of the British empire and its colonies in East and Central Africa did not begin for the first time on 3 September 1939. The propagandists engaged in wartime publicity efforts did not embark on their activities with a

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<sup>7</sup> As Sir Charles Jeffries commented, 'anything like a forward policy for the development of the resources of the colonies and the advancement of their peoples could clearly not be undertaken without possible assistance from the mother country and such assistance could not be forthcoming without the active support of Parliament and the British public', Whitehall and the Colonial Service: An Administrative Memoir, 1939-56 (London, 1972), p.16.



tabula rasa. The debates which took place in the inter-war period influenced the debates which took place during the war and the plans made for the post-war period. It is the intention of this chapter therefore to place the debate on colonial public relations in the general context of official attitudes in the Colonial Office towards propaganda from the First World War onwards. Only by understanding the general debate and the antecedents of imperial propaganda can the role and nature of the projection of Britain's 'new empire' in East and Central Africa be seen in its proper context.

#### Antecedents: Means and Messages

When plans were being drawn up in the 1930s for the shadow Ministry of Information by a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the planning for the Dominions, Colonies and India was organised under the auspices of the Royal Institute for International Affairs. This task was undertaken by two men who were to play a prominent role in the future operations of the Empire Division of the MOI in wartime, Harry Hodson\*, the editor of Round Table and future director of the Division and Vincent Harlow\*, the Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at Kings College London and later in charge of the Colonial Section in the Empire Division. As their starting point they asked the Colonial Office to provide them with information about propaganda conducted in the Colonies during the First World War. The results were not impressive.<sup>8</sup> The barrenness of the ground, however, is not necessarily surprising since 'most documents relating to

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<sup>8</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, Fass to Parkinson, 13 February 1939 and minute by Calder, 2 March 1939. The list included: 'Papers Relating to German Atrocities and Breaches of the Rules of War' (1916); 'Reports on the Treatment by the Germans of British Prisoners and Natives in German East Africa' (1917); 'Correspondence relating to the Wishes of the Natives of the German Colonies and their Future Government' (1918); Handbooks prepared under the Director of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office, No.114 Treatment of the Natives in the German Colonies (HMSO, 1920); The Prussian Lash in Africa, by 'Africanus' (1918) and a pamphlet by the Librarian of the Royal Empire Society, Evan Lewin, German Rule in Africa (1918).



Great Britain's wartime propaganda were either destroyed in 1920 or else "lost" in the years that followed'.<sup>9</sup>

During the First World War the Colonial Office did not possess any public relations or propaganda machinery of its own.<sup>10</sup> Instead the General Department of the Colonial Office served as a liaison office and as a conduit for propaganda produced by other organisations or departments.<sup>11</sup> In previous work undertaken on the British propaganda effort during the First World War imperial propaganda has not been considered as a separate subject of study but as part of the wider propaganda effort. The imperial nature of Britain's involvement in the First World War was used as evidence of Britain's commitment to the Allied war effort. However, the imperial theme required careful handling because of the vulnerability of Britain to

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-1918 (London, 1982), p.vii.

<sup>10</sup> The Colonial Office had taken an initiative in imperial propaganda before 1914, with the establishment of the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee in 1902. It was encouraged by the Board of Education one of many organisations involved in developing imperial studies, to provide 'the people of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and colonies "a more vivid and accurate knowledge than they possess of the geography, social life, and the economic possibilities of the various parts of the empire"'. Financed not by imperial funds but by colonial and private donations, the method the COVIC employed was lectures to schools accompanied by lantern slides. This activity continued until 1914 when it was transferred to the Royal Colonial Institute. One of the reasons resulting in the lack of success of this particular venture was 'the identification of the COVIC with the Colonial Office', MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire, pp. 162-66.

<sup>11</sup> For the literature on British propaganda during the First World War see in particular, Sanders and Taylor, op.cit.; Gary Messinger, British Propaganda and the State in the First World War (Manchester, 1992); Cate Haste, Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War (London, 1971); James Duane Squires, British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917 (Cambridge, MA, 1935); Peter Buitenhuis The Great War of Words: Literature as Propaganda 1914-18 and After (London, 1989). For a more general survey of British imperial propaganda from the end of the nineteenth century see Thomas G. August, The Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890-1940 (London, 1985).



criticism of its policies in Ireland and India. Pamphlets were produced in defense of Britain's position, for example, England, Germany and the Irish Question (1917) and Lionel Curtis's Letter to the People of India on Responsible Government (1918).<sup>12</sup>

The theme of spontaneous empire unity which was to play a prominent part in imperial propaganda at the beginning of the Second World War can also be found in the aims of Home Publicity produced by the National War Aims Committee, which had been established in August 1917 to counteract war-weariness and the peace movement and coordinate voluntary organisations<sup>13</sup>:

To encourage unity and stifle party and class dissensions by dwelling insistently on the momentous issues at stake, on the gravity of the crisis, on the spontaneous cooperation of Oversea Dominions, on the moral and material support of America, on the fact that the cohesion and resolution of the Allies depends very largely on the example and inspiration of this country, and on the records of history which make it impossible to conceive that the people of this country will waver in their fixed purpose.<sup>14</sup>

But this theme of empire unity which continued to be pushed in imperial propaganda throughout the war flew in the face of the facts. Although the experience of the First World War undeniably demonstrated the combined power of the British empire, with the Allied and Associated powers' commitment to national self-determination in 1918 it is clear that the First World War provided the catalyst not for closer imperial unity, but for Dominion independence.<sup>15</sup>

The imperial theme was also seen as a stick to beat the Germans with by exposing the methods of German colonial administration. This theme formed one of the major components of Wellington House's propaganda effort to neutral states and in the Dominions. The United States,

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<sup>12</sup> Sanders and Taylor, op.cit., pp. 152-4.

<sup>13</sup> Sanders and Taylor, op.cit., pp.65-70.

<sup>14</sup> PRO, INF4/4A, memorandum on 'Home Publicity During the Great War: National War Aims Committee', undated.

<sup>15</sup> Sanders and Taylor, op.cit., p.152 and August, op.cit., p.22.



for example, was to be approached under five main headings:

First, the militarist ideal in German life with its contempt for arbitration and its malice aforethought toward neutral Belgium.

Second, the war policies of imperial Germany and a comparison of these 'damnable practices' (atrocities, deportation of workers, submarine warfare, etc.) with Allied methods.

Third, a comparison of British colonial methods with German methods.

Fourth, the idealistic war aims of the Allies in contrast with the German motives for opposing the new world-order.

Fifth, Great Britain's friendship for the United States described in the phrase 'hands across the sea'.<sup>16</sup>

Propaganda for the empire was essentially a news and press based effort and aimed to keep the people of the empire informed about the war. Official propaganda films produced during the war were given empire distribution, but the main emphasis of the imperial propaganda effort was on the printed word.<sup>17</sup> In these years before the Empire Service of the BBC, the main and speediest way of informing British settler communities about the war was to keep the empire press abreast of war news. The empire press were serviced with articles compiled by the War Office special propaganda and censorship division M.I.7 passed on to them via the Royal Colonial Institute. By 1918 250 empire newspapers were being supplied in this manner. Between January 1917 and November 1918 41,891 copies of these articles had been issued.<sup>18</sup> M.I.7 also analysed the colonial press and prepared a weekly summary.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Squires, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>17</sup> PRO, INF4/4A, memorandum, 'British Propaganda During the War, 1914-18', undated. As Philip Taylor has noted, 'with broadcasting and the cinema still in their infancy, the press became the vital link between government and governed', Philip Taylor, 'Publicity and Diplomacy: the Impact of the First World War upon Foreign Office Attitudes towards the Press', in David Dilks (ed.) Retreat from Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century, Volume 1, 1906-39 (London, 1981), p.43.

<sup>18</sup> PRO, INF4/1B, memorandum, 'Military Press Control: a History of the Work of M.I.7, 1914-1919', undated.

<sup>19</sup> PRO, INF4/4B, War Office to Treasury, April 1918.

The Colonial Office acted as a 'post office' for the Official Press Bureau and telegraphed a summary of the news received in the preceding 24 hours around the empire.<sup>20</sup> For reasons of economy, the daily transmission of war news was cut to a weekly bulletin in February 1916 despite the objections received from British East Africa (Kenya) that daily news was of the 'utmost' value, it was republished in the local newspapers and in the official government Gazette, so that even the most remote areas of BEA where Reuters was not received were able to follow the course of the war.<sup>21</sup>

The Colonial Office also cooperated with the Department of Information which had been created at the end of January 1917 following a rationalisation of Britain's propaganda effort through the absorption of Wellington House and existing government press bureaux. The new Department of Information provided a special Reuters news service for the empire. The Department of Information took care of the empire press correspondents in Britain, arranging facilities for interviews with prominent personalities involved in the war effort and tours to armaments factories. These correspondents visited the Department of Information on a daily basis. Twice a week they had a press briefing with the Director of Information, and once a week with, General Maurice, the Director of Military Operations, Admiral Hall, the Director of Intelligence at the Admiralty and Lord Robert Cecil, the deputy Foreign Secretary and Minister of Blockade. Every three weeks the Department of Information arranged for a group of empire journalists to visit British headquarters in France. In addition to this press work with the empire correspondents, the Department of Information prepared special articles which were despatched to empire newspapers direct, arranged for the distribution of pamphlets and books through 'non-official' channels and prepared monthly

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<sup>20</sup> PRO, CO323/643, Colonial Office minute, 2 September 1914.

<sup>21</sup> PRO, CO323/689, BEA to Colonial Office, 13 December 1915.



letters to Protestant pastors and Catholic priests in their mission stations.<sup>22</sup> The African populations of East Africa were not forgotten and the Colonial Office worked with the Foreign Office in the preparation of a newspaper in Swahili in answer to German propaganda which by 1918 had three Swahili newspapers running.<sup>23</sup>

When the British propaganda effort came to be centralised under a single Ministry of Information in 1918 the organisation of imperial propaganda was reviewed. It was felt that not enough had been done to publicise the 'greatness, power and resources' of the British Empire to neutral opinion who throughout the war had been presented with a continuous flow of German propaganda describing their empire as 'a model of efficiency' and as 'a tower of strength'. Rather late in the day plans were made for the MOI to lead a new campaign to rectify this situation and publicise the strength of the British empire. The campaign would publicise what the empire stood for and what self-government meant. It would explain the vastness of empire resources and 'our commanding control over a great many raw materials'. It would explain Britain's 'success in governing alien races' and how Britain had 'built up a free commonwealth of nations by freedom instead of by force'. In June 1918 Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister of Information and proprietor of the Daily Express and Evening Standard appointed Lord Rothermere, the proprietor of the Daily Mail and the Evening News, Director of the British Empire.<sup>24</sup>

As can be seen the imperial propaganda activity during the First World War was modest. It concentrated on the printed word and keeping the empire abreast of war news. This relationship with the War Office was continued in the

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<sup>22</sup> PRO, INF4/4A, memorandum, 'Great War Propaganda: Particular Countries', undated.

<sup>23</sup> PRO, FO395/64 and 164.

<sup>24</sup> PRO, INF4/5, memorandum presented to and approved by the Minister of Information by Robert Donald, 19 March 1918. Empire propaganda was actually managed by Evelyn Wrench, head of the Overseas League and later helped to found the English-Speaking Union and was proprietor of the Spectator.



post-war period. While the Foreign Office managed to retain a reduced News Department once the Ministry of Information had been disbanded in October 1918, the Colonial Office lacked any machinery for the conduct of public relations. In 1921, however Winston Churchill\*, the newly appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies, the former Secretary of State for War and newspaper correspondent during the Boer War, arranged for the War Office's Press Officer to act for the Colonial Office.<sup>25</sup> The reason was that the creation of a Middle East Department in the Colonial Office following British assumption of Middle East Mandates in Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine had brought the Colonial Office 'unaccustomed press prominence'.<sup>26</sup>

Mariel Grant has recently argued that it is rather misleading to view the inter-war period as an era of official rejection of publicity activities reflecting 'the government's distaste for its success at propaganda during the [First World] war'.<sup>27</sup> Grant points out that the decision to disband the Ministry of Information 'did not affect departmental publicity organisations' established during the First World War.<sup>28</sup> This may indeed be true of domestic departments like the Post Office, but hardly so in the case of the Colonial Office. One Press Officer does not make a publicity organisation or prove official conversion to the point of view that publicity needed to be employed as a means of implementing departmental policy.

The issuing of information to the press on demand, the

<sup>25</sup> Jeffries, The Colonial Office, p.182. Between 1919 and 1929 this officer was David Caird, former journalist and Congregational Minister who became Director of Publicity for the National War savings Committee and the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War.

<sup>26</sup> Marjorie Olgilvy-Webb, The Government Explains: a Study of the Information Services (London, 1965), p.51.

<sup>27</sup> Mariel Grant, Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain, (Oxford, 1994), p.2-3 and p.34-5.

<sup>28</sup> ibid. For example Grant has shown that by 1920 no fewer than 47 staff in 11 government departments were engaged in unspecified publicity work.

pre-Second World War function of the Press Officer in the Colonial Office, is also not the same thing as having an active press relations policy. Pro-active initiatives were seldom undertaken by the Press Officer before the Second World War. 'Official bulletins' were not issued unless there were grave outbreaks of disorder like the Arab rising in Palestine and the West Indian riots of 1938 or events of great national importance, such as the coronation of George VI in 1937.<sup>29</sup> In general the attitude was passive:

The existing practice is ... not to volunteer information to the Press but rather to wait, to see whether any enquiry is made by the Press or whether anything is published ... Such justification as this negative practice possesses lies in the fact that if the Press should learn nothing of the matter, the world being none the wiser, foreign propagandists have no opportunity of broadcasting exaggerated versions founded on our own admissions.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, a Press Officer is a specialist with a narrow range of functions, which ought to be a subordinate part of an overall structure for public relations in general, if a department is to be regarded as having anything resembling a modern approach to the place of publicity in government. This was already well understood before the Second World War. Sir Norman Scorgie the Deputy Controller of HMSO and future Deputy-Director General of the MOI observed in 1938:

there was a clear distinction between a Press officer, whose essential qualification was an intimate knowledge of the working of the press and ought consequently to be chosen from the press ... and the Public Relations Officer who was chiefly concerned with the spreading a better understanding of the Civil Service among the general public, a post for which a civil servant was obviously indicated. This distinction was reflected in the degree of responsibility enjoyed by these ... officials. The Public Relations Officer was expected to display a high degree of initiative and assume considerable responsibility, whereas the Press Officer's work was carefully controlled by his superiors.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> C.f. PRO, C0323/1496/1 for details of Colonial Office preparations to publicise the coronation.

<sup>30</sup> PRO, C0323/1588/5, minute by Bowyer, 27 January, 1938 and minute by Ridgway, 24 January 1938.

<sup>31</sup> PRO, T162/531/40335/1, 3 May 1938, quoted in Grant, op.cit., p.236.



As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, it realised that the Press Officer needed specialist knowledge of the Press, and indeed two out of the three pre-Second World War Press Officers were trained journalists. However the Colonial Office failed to develop a Public Relations Department for the overall conduct of its publicity between the wars or even to establish the post of Public Relations Officer. In thinking and in organisation of public relations the Colonial Office clearly lagged behind the times amongst the major departments of Whitehall.<sup>32</sup> It should be borne in mind though that the Colonial Office was an old dog gradually learning specialist new tricks in a civil service culture and it was not until the Second World War that it adopted the functionally differentiated departmental structure already developing elsewhere.<sup>33</sup>

A Press Officer with a journalistic background was also isolated in the culture of the pre-war Colonial Office. His colleagues were not always sympathetic to his function of communicating their business to the outside world and had been accustomed to conduct their duties in the absence of widespread public scrutiny and criticism. As Sir Charles Jeffries wrote:

Parliamentary and public interest in the Colonies was only intermittently aroused usually when some riot,

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<sup>32</sup> For example, until 1930 when a separate Personnel Division was established, most of what could be termed 'subject', non-territorial and general questions of interest to all colonies were dealt with by the General Department. Before the Second World War the Economics Department and the Social Services Department were the only other subject departments created in 1934 and 1938 respectively. The great blossoming of subjects departments occurred during the Second World War: Defence Department, 1940; Public Relations Department, 1942; Communications Department and Welfare and Students Department, 1943; International Relations Department and Research Department, 1944 and Legal Department, 1949, c.f. Lee, 'Forward Thinking ...', pp.65-7 for the growth of subject departments in relation to geographical departments.

<sup>33</sup> C.f. Stephen Constantine, The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914-1940 (London, 1984), p.9 for this point in relation to policy-making and colonial development policies in a Colonial Office handicapped by a lack of organisation to deal with general economic questions before 1934.



famine, epidemic or other disaster brought one of the territories to the headlines. The general indifference was in some ways convenient to the Colonial Office, since it enabled much constructive work to be done, quietly, uncontroversially in building up efficient administrative organisations in the territories.<sup>34</sup>

As Press Officer Ridgway became quite exasperated at the negative reaction publicity questions produced in the Colonial Office and at the attitude shown by officials like Sir John Maffey (later Lord Rugby)\*, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1933-7. In giving evidence on behalf of the Colonial Office to the Civil Estimates Committee Maffey 'expressed as a statement of fact that the Colonies required but little propaganda' and that the general Colonial Office view was 'that the less we said about our Colonial Empire the better'.<sup>35</sup> It is a nice irony that Ridgway himself having chafed under the restricted perception of his function as little more than a glorified Librarian issuing information on demand, ended up as the Colonial Office Librarian in 1940.<sup>36</sup>

Wherever possible the Colonial Office preferred to let other agencies and organisations publicise the empire. Propaganda was largely devoted to the education of the British public about the economic opportunities throughout the empire, of 'commercial intelligence'<sup>37</sup> or to promote tourism. Agencies working to this end included the East African Trade and Information Office, the Gold Coast Government Bureau, the Malayan Information Agency, the Travel Section of the Sudan Government London Office, the Maltese Government Tourist Bureau, the Office of the Cyprus Trade Commissioner in London, the Jamaica Tourist Trade Development Board, the Shopping Weeks organised by the British Empire League and the British Empire Producers

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<sup>34</sup> Jeffries, Whitehall and the Colonial Service ...,p.16.

<sup>35</sup> PRO, CO323/1615/16, Ridgway to Locker, 20 June 1938.

<sup>36</sup> Parkinson, op.cit., pp.66-7.

<sup>37</sup> August, op.cit.,p.71.

Association. Other propaganda opportunities were provided by the annual British Industries Fairs and the exhibitions of the Imperial Institute.

But the Colonial Office could not act as if it were a modern-day King Canute and command the consequences of developments in mass communications to go away. Reluctantly it had, at the very least, to add the responsibility for dealing with matters arising from or connected with the arrival of the cinema and the radio, the two new mass media of the age, to the duties of the officials of the General Department. This was not without difficulties. In the inter-war period the Colonial Office was staffed by officers of the Victorian age, typically from the upper-middle classes, who like others of their group shared little experience and less empathy for these media, especially the cinema. As A.J.P. Taylor remarked about the cinema in the inter-war period: 'highly educated people saw in it only vulgarity and the end of old England'.<sup>38</sup> The nature of the General Department's attitude to publicity issues relating to radio and the cinema, like the Colonial Office's attitude to the Press, was essentially passive and reactive. Even so the very limited extent to which the Colonial Office was involved in propaganda was opposed either on grounds of 'principle' - a reluctance to become involved in such scurrilous and ungentlemanly activity - or financial - that propaganda was an expensive luxury. Treasury parsimony was the name of the game when it came to the Colonial and Middle Eastern Vote. Colonies were expected to pay for themselves and become self-sufficient.

It would seem then that the best known of the inter-war imperial propaganda agencies the Empire Marketing Board does not fit comfortably into a story of Colonial Office disinterest in imperial propaganda.<sup>39</sup> However, while the

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<sup>38</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945 (London, 1979), p.237.

<sup>39</sup> For an excellent short account of the propaganda activities of the EMB c.f. Stephen Constantine, '"Bringing the Empire Alive": the Empire Marketing Board and Imperial



EMB represented the first government financed large-scale organised attempt to promote the marketing of empire produce it was not a Colonial Office concern but the creation of the Dominions Office and chaired by the Secretary of State for the Dominions. The EMB was involved with what Leo Amery\*, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, 1925-9 called the 'selling' of the idea of empire<sup>40</sup> but this was the selling of the 'old' empire.

Moreover, the decision to create the body represented the adoption of a second best policy alternative to the introduction of preferential tariffs for foodstuffs and was 'the principal organ for non-tariff preference'.<sup>41</sup> The EMB, therefore, did not represent the embracement of imperial propaganda per se. Once the EMB's raison d'etre had been removed by the 1932 Import Duties Act in the wake of the decision to abandon free trade and adopt a policy of imperial tariff preference the organisation was dismantled and with it official British propaganda about the empire.

The 'calculated intent' behind the propaganda produced by the EMB was economic. Some of the characters involved in the EMB campaigns appear later in the story of the projection of the colonial empire in the war and undoubtedly the experience gained by Gervas Huxley\*, the future director of the Empire Division of the MOI, whilst working for the EMB and in the commercial sector proved invaluable. However, that the only experience of official pro-active propaganda the Colonial Office had before the war was commercial information had important implications. Unlike its French counter-part, the Colonial Office did not embrace the principle of 'prestige' projection of the

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Propaganda, 1926-33' in MacKenzie, Imperialism and Popular Culture, pp.192-231. See also, August, op.cit., pp.74-81; J.M. Lee, 'The Dissolution of the Empire Marketing Board, 1933: Reflections on a Diary', The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 1:1, (1971); Robert Self, 'Treasury Control and the Empire Marketing Board: The Rise and Fall of Non-Tariff Preference in Britain, 1924-33', Twentieth Century British History, 5:2, (1994) and Taylor, The Projection of Britain ..., pp.103-110.

<sup>40</sup> Taylor, The Projection of Britain ..., p.104.

<sup>41</sup> Self, op.cit., p.154.



empire and had no public relations machinery in place by the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>42</sup>

While the EMB existed the Colonial Office ignored propaganda in the knowledge that someone else was projecting the empire, albeit the image of a dominions dominant empire. The 'best way' of conducting publicity, according to the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, William Ormsby-Gore (later Lord Harlech)\*, was to leave it to the EMB.<sup>43</sup> Moreover the Colonial Office was not interested even in defending the British colonial reputation. For instance at a meeting of the Colonial Office conference in 1927, a representative from the Forestry Department of British Honduras was perturbed by the 'unjustified' attacks made against his colony in the British press and the lack of mechanism for redress. Ormsby-Gore offered little sympathy: 'British Honduras gets off very lightly compared with Kenya, which is the whipping-boy of all the Press'. Ormsby-Gore had no intention of addressing the public relations issue:

I think that if you try and deal with these things or create machinery to deal with them, you fall into a quagmire.<sup>44</sup>

As noted above, in practice the General Department of the Colonial Office dealt with questions received by the Colonial Office relating to propaganda but this was on an ad hoc and reactive basis. While the commercial film industry had recognised the value films with empire as its subject matter and the absorbed by the inter-war cinema-going publics with its 'romantic, adventurous and erotic' imagery<sup>45</sup>, the Colonial Office did not attempt to utilise film to project the colonies itself. Arguably they did not need to as they could rely on the films produced by the EMB

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<sup>42</sup> C.f. August, op.cit., passim for this comparative approach.

<sup>43</sup> PRO, CO323/977/6, 8th Meeting of the Colonial Conference, 1927.

<sup>44</sup> ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Jeffrey Richards, 'Boy's Own Empire: Feature Films and Imperialism in the 1930s', in MacKenzie, Imperialism and Popular Culture, p.43.

and the holdings of the film library of the Imperial Institute could do the job for them.

In one area the attitude towards film was not based on commercial considerations. The educational value of film was recognised as the best way of describing one part of the empire to another and as the Imperial Conference of 1926 concluded as an agent for maintaining and enhancing Britain's imperial prestige. The way forward was seen as encouraging a strong British film industry for these purposes and showing only British films in colonies rather than producing films in the colonial empire.<sup>46</sup> The Federation of British Industries established an organisation to supply films to the colonies and colonial governments were encouraged to become members of the British Film Institute and use their films.<sup>47</sup> But the Colonial Office was not prepared to finance the production or distribution of films, and films for educational purposes were to remain a 'luxury, though a very useful luxury'.<sup>48</sup>

The unwillingness to spend money, however desirable it may seem, was clearly shown in the attitude towards the Bantu Education Kinema Experiment. Originally financed by the Carnegie Corporation, when the project came to an end the governments of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda combined to apply for a grant from the Colonial Development Fund because the value of film particularly in regard to the instruction of agricultural methods was recognised.<sup>49</sup> Uganda later withdrew from the idea of making an

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<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO323/974/1, note by Hanns Vischer, Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa, 'The Educational Use of Cinematograph Films', April 1927; minute by Boyd, 14 June 1927.

<sup>47</sup> PRO, CO323/1091/11 and CO323/1356/3.

<sup>48</sup> PRO, CO323/1169/1, minute by Vischer, 23 May 1932 following requests from Palestine and the Falkland Islands for EMB films to show in schools. It was decided that the EMB would supply films on condition that the colonies paid for them themselves.

<sup>49</sup> PRO, CO323/1421/10, minute by Greenhill, 19 February 1937.



application because it was unimpressed with the personnel running the project.<sup>50</sup> However the Colonial Office did not fault the idea of films being used in the right context. In support of support specific welfare and health campaigns, educational films were

of great use - associated with a Health Campaign (anti-mosquito work, etc.) or with a Baby week (a film of how to care for a healthy baby and so on). But to force people to shove in a 10 minute film on 'How to grow cotton' among a lot of Mickey Mice would only lead to yawns.<sup>51</sup>

The General Department also gave advice on film censorship questions which in the 1930s appeared to be dominated by concern about German and Italian film propaganda in the Middle East<sup>52</sup> and films which could be interpreted as being 'pro-native'<sup>53</sup> or 'anti-native'<sup>54</sup> or which could offend local customs.<sup>55</sup>

But there was no question of the Colonial Office establishing its own organisation to make and distribute films. Moreover while some members of the General Department were convinced of the educational value of films in the colonies, this did not necessarily extend to the commercial cinema. When preparations were being made for the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937, the Colonial Office was requested to cooperate with the Department of Overseas Trade to facilitate the production and distribution of newsreels of the event by

<sup>50</sup> PRO, CO323/1421/10, minute by Bowyer, 28 June 1937.

<sup>51</sup> PRO, CO323/1421/10, minute by Flood, 8 July 1937.

<sup>52</sup> For example, c.f. CO323/1421/1 for Italian films in Palestine in 1937; CO323/1421/3 for the Italian film Leila Daughter of the Desert in Iran and Palestine in 1937 and CO323/1421/6 for the banning German films in Palestine.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see CO323/1421/2 on the 'pro-native' film My Song Goes Forth starring Paul Robeson.

<sup>54</sup> For example, c.f. CO323/1421/4, for the attempts to ban the film Slave Trader in 1937.

<sup>55</sup> For example, c.f. CO323/1421/7 for the banning in Malta of the film The Man Who Could Work Miracles on the grounds that it could offend a deeply religious and Catholic local population.



listing colonial governments who newsreel companies could contact. The idea was utterly abhorrent to Sir John Shuckburgh who wrote 'the idea of filming a service in the Abbey is repulsive to my Victorian mind'.<sup>56</sup>

As with films, imperial broadcasting was also seen as a desirable activity by the Colonial Office but again financial considerations loomed large. Broadcasting was also perceived to be a luxury activity.<sup>57</sup> In April 1930 the first meeting of the Trade Propaganda Committee under the auspices of the Department of Overseas Trade, favoured the development of a broadcasting scheme in the colonies to increase trade. Again the Colonial Office attitude was that such activity, while desirable, was out of the question if it depended on colonial government finance alone.<sup>58</sup> And Sir Gilbert Grindle\*, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1925-31, had more general reservations:

I very much doubt any good for trade coming out of propaganda by wireless. It would be on a level with 'British Goods Are Best' on stamps. The only thing that really does good is for someone to go round personally and show the wares and explain them.<sup>59</sup>

When in 1931 the BBC approached the Colonial Office to cooperate with them in giving 'militant publicity' about the empire by qualified people in a 'breezy style', Grindle minuted that this proposal for broadcasting by permanent civil servants would be an 'undesirable' development and

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<sup>56</sup> PRO, C0323/1421/15, minute by Shuckburgh, 12 March 1937.

<sup>57</sup> For the history of the evolution of the Empire Service and imperial broadcasting see Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom Volume II, the Golden Age of Wireless (London, 1965), pp.369-410; John M. MacKenzie, 'propaganda and the BBC Empire Service', Jeremy Hawthorn (ed.), Propaganda, Persuasion and Polemic (London, 1987), pp.37-55 and John M. MacKenzie, '"In Touch With the Infinite": the BBC and the Empire, 1923-53', MacKenzie, Imperialism and Popular Culture, pp.165-191.

<sup>58</sup> PRO, C0323/1102/2, minute by Morris, 4 April 1930.

<sup>59</sup> PRO, C0323/1102/2, minute by Grindle, 7 April 1930.

'would one day develop into a nuisance'.<sup>60</sup> However, by early 1935 liaison with the BBC was clear. Names of Colonial Service officers on leave were submitted to the BBC and a useful 'informal' arrangement was devised whereby the Colonial Office would have 'a chance of advising on the text of addresses accepted by the [British Broadcasting] Corporation as a quid pro quo for our help'.<sup>61</sup> This cooperation continued with some officials clearly flattered by being asked to take part in broadcasts. The BBC wanted to broadcast talks with themes which would 'make the officer in the Colonial Service overseas think he is getting something exclusive, even a trifle indiscreet'. Sir George Tomlinson\*, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1930-9 and former officer with the Nigerian Administrative Service, described with evident enthusiasm his experience following his broadcast talk on the Empire Service entitled, 'Secrets of the Prison House',

It is almost too good to be true that my innocent babblings to Mr. Cliffe [his interviewer] in a short interval between two plays should be so acceptable. But the curtain went up before I had time to tell him that another title for a talk which I thought would come very well from the head of the Personnel Division of the Colonial Office was 'Strings and their Pullers'. On the other hand I have decided not to put forward yet a third title which occurred to me, namely, 'Jobbery in its Highest Aspects'.<sup>62</sup>

Foreign broadcasting in the colonial empire was monitored. The threat posed by Italian and German broadcasting to the Middle East and the initiation of BBC foreign language broadcasting in Arabic is well-known.<sup>63</sup> In Africa the Secretary of State for the Colonies warned colonial

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<sup>60</sup> PRO, CO323/1158/13, BBC to Colonial Office, 23 February 1931; minute by Grindle, 27 February 1931.

<sup>61</sup> PRO, CO323/1277/9, minute by McSweeney, 11 January 1935.

<sup>62</sup> PRO, CO323/1586/10 Wace to Tomlinson, 18 February 1938; Tomlinson to Wace, 24 March 1938. Tomlinson had also been a member of the Colonial Office Committee on Colonial Appointments, 1929-30.

<sup>63</sup> C.f. Taylor, Projection of Britain, chapter 5, 'The BBC foreign-language broadcasts', pp.181-215 and the official account, Peter Partner, Arab Voices (London, 1988).



Governors to be on their guard against German short-wave broadcasts covering areas which were not covered by Empire Service broadcasts from Daventry. However the responses from Africa were rather nonchalant. Kenya and Uganda found that these broadcasts did not have a pronounced propagandist tendency and in any case believed them to be a limited threat as few if any Africans owned radios.<sup>64</sup>

In the increasingly tense international climate an official noted in July 1939 that 'broadcasting facilities have nowadays become more of a necessity than a luxury' for both education and the dissemination of news to colonial populations<sup>65</sup> but it was clear there was little money available for these kind of developments. Indeed an experiment in broadcasting in Uganda, although successful brought home to the Colonial Office two lessons 'a full dress broadcasting service is - (a) very expensive to start, and (b) very expensive and rather difficult to run'.<sup>66</sup>

Exhibitions were an obvious conduit for imperial propaganda, emphasising 'the notion of the Empire as an interlocking economic unit'.<sup>67</sup> Until the New York World's Fair in 1939<sup>68</sup> British participation in international exhibitions was economic in character, underlined by the fact that it was the Department of Overseas Trade that organised official participation at all exhibitions<sup>69</sup> until the creation of the CEMB which became responsible for colonial participation 1938-9. That the Colonial Office judged the success or failure of participation in

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<sup>64</sup> PRO, CO323/1338/8, circular despatch to Governors in Africa, 1 June 1935; Kenya to Colonial Office, 24 July 1935 and Uganda to Colonial Office, 14 August 1935.

<sup>65</sup> PRO, CO323/1650/7, minute by Bigg, 6 July 1939.

<sup>66</sup> PRO, CO323/1650/9, minute by Eastwood, 9 August 1939.

<sup>67</sup> MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire, p.107 and pp.97-120 for a history of imperial exhibitions.

<sup>68</sup> see below

<sup>69</sup> August, op.cit., p.141.



international exhibitions in economic terms is clear. For example, when Roland Vernon\*, an economics expert in the General Department, who had worked in the Treasury during the First World War and had been the financial adviser to the government of Iraq, 1925-8, visited the International Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931. Vernon appeared somewhat puzzled at the attitude of French officials. They were concerned to educate the French public by demonstrating that 'there is such thing as a French colonial empire'. He admired the Dutch pavilion as 'a very good piece of propaganda' with its 'real educational value and a first rate statistical technique'. But he was convinced that the decision for the British colonial empire not to be officially represented was correct:

I find it hard to believe that [participation] has direct economic results, - that anyone will buy more tea or cocoa or sugar or rubber or palm oil or maize or serial hemp, for example - because of it.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, colonial governments were choosy about exhibitions they agreed to be represented at and the calculation was made largely on the basis of whether it was worth the expense in terms of expected increases in trade. Colonial participation in exhibitions was not financed out of imperial funds.<sup>71</sup>

The Colonial Empire Marketing Board was established in 1937 following the recommendations of an inter-departmental committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to do for the colonies what the EMB did for the Dominions. It had its own board and office and was financed on the Colonial Office Vote and supervised by the Economic Department in the Colonial Office. Its aim was to promote the economic welfare of the colonial empire in Britain and overseas by 'the better marketing of Colonial products by a service of marketing officers, publicity, including participation in

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<sup>70</sup> PRO, CO323/1153/27, minute by Vernon, 6 June 1931.

<sup>71</sup> For example, little colonial participation was expected at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow in 1938; c.f. PRO, CO323/1393/10, minute by Eastwood, 8 January 1937.

exhibitions, and research'<sup>72</sup> and by 'selling more goods at better advantage'.<sup>73</sup> The CEMB included MPs, members from the Department of Overseas Trade and the Imperial Institute and representatives of commercial and shipping interests.<sup>74</sup>

It began its work in 1938 and its main activity in this early stage was investigations into and recommendations for improvements in marketing methods for particular colonial products. Colonial products were considered hard to advertise because frequently they did not reach the consumer in their original form. In view of this it was thought that propaganda would play a smaller part in the activities of the CEMB than in its predecessor the EMB. As the Secretary of State for the Colonies observed in his speech to the first meeting of the CEMB Board:

Apart from direct contact with possible purchasers, you may find a fruitful field of activity in the judicious use of publicity; but in this regard I am bound to remark that I do not think that most Colonial products are of such a kind that their sales can be appreciably increased by general advertisement.<sup>75</sup>

In the first instance it was to engage in market

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<sup>72</sup> PRO, C0852/115/2, DO to Dominions, 11 May 1937.

<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0852/115/9, draft of the Secretary of State for the Colonies speech to the CEMB, October 1937.

<sup>74</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies was the chairman of the CEMB with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies the vice-chairman. Four MPs from the government and the opposition served, along with Sir Harry Lindsay the Director of the Imperial Institute, a representative from the Department of Overseas Trade, two representatives from the Colonial Office and 6 representatives from the business community, Peter Cadbury of Cadbury Bros. Ltd.; Arthur Foster, vice-chairman of the Empire Cotton Growers' Association; Sir William Bradshaw, president of the Cooperative Wholesale Society; Leslie Runciman, director of Runciman and Co. Ltd.; Captain Lyttleton, director of Amalgamated Metal Corp. Ltd. and Sir John Chancellor, chairman of the Agricultural Marketing Facilities Committee.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, C0852/115/9, draft of speech by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the CEMB, October 1937.



survey work.<sup>76</sup> Publicity was to be limited to exhibition work and all Colonial Office involvement in exhibitions would hence forth be dealt with by the CEMB and not through the General Department as previously.<sup>77</sup> The availability of finance for colonial produce advertising was dependent on the extent to which the industry concerned was prepared to spend its own money for the purpose.<sup>78</sup>

By 1938 it was clear that the debate had moved on and the Colonial Office was becoming more aware of the need to adopt a different attitude towards public relations and propaganda. A growing distaste for purely commercial propaganda is clear in the discussions which took place in the Colonial Office culminating in the decision to adopt a 'more forward policy in regard to public relations generally' just before the outbreak of war in August 1939.<sup>79</sup> This policy was not implemented until July 1940 with the appointment of a Public Relations Officer and the creation of the Public Relations Department in 1942, but a change in attitude is discernable as public relations had arrived on the Colonial Office agenda.

This change can partly be explained by the leadership expressed by Malcolm MacDonald\*, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, from May 1938, who had held the post in 1935 and was the son of former P.M. Ramsay and the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava\*, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State from 1937, and future Director of the Empire Division, MOI, 1941-2, over the question. British complacency was shaken by the changed international situation in which the Colonial Office was operating during the second part of the 1930s. With the emergence of the

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<sup>76</sup> PRO, CO852/115/2, minute by Caine, 8 February 1937.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, CO852/115/3/File.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, CO852/170/16, Colonial Office to Kenya, 28 February 1938.

<sup>79</sup> PRO, CO323, minute by Eastwood, 11 August 1939. Taylor also identifies 1938 as the year in which propaganda had become 'a subject considered worthy of serious consideration at the highest levels of British government', Taylor, Projection of Britain, p.243.



'colonial problem' a more positive approach was necessitated if the British empire was to be successfully defended. In this new situation the British empire was under threat from Germany's demands for colonial restitution and the appeasement of the Chamberlain government which was prepared to entertain the idea of adjustments in Africa as late as July 1939. There were also the repercussions on Britain's reputation as a colonial power of the non-response to Italy's conquest of the last 'independent' state in Africa Abyssinia in 1936 and the threat posed by Japanese expansion in South East Asia.<sup>80</sup> Within the empire the colonies had not recovered from the effects of the Depression and the price collapse in the primary products market which contributed to tensions culminating in outbursts like the riots on the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia in 1935, the troubles on the Mauritian sugar estates in 1937, the strikes and riots in the West Indies in 1935, 1937 and 1938 and the cocoa hold up in the Gold Coast and Nigeria in 1937 (by peasant farmers protesting against low prices). There was the on-going Arab revolt in Palestine and reported bombings in Aden. The 'colonial question' had become an Achilles' heel of Britain's international reputation to the extent that there was reluctance to advertise 'the value of colonial trade' in foreign countries.<sup>81</sup>

Just as these factors contributed to the debate on reform and helped to produce the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, similarly in the publicity field the Colonial Office began to take public opinion into consideration more than hitherto. After the Munich crisis, Malcolm MacDonald argued:

In future, critics of the Great Britain would be directed more and more against her management of the Colonial Empire, and it was essential to provide as little basis as possible for such criticism. It was an essential part of her defence policy that her

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<sup>80</sup> Michael Havinden and David Meredith, Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960 (London, 1993), p.193.

<sup>81</sup> PRO, CO323/1615/2, minute by Eastwood, 14 April 1938.

reputation as a Colonial power should be unassailable.<sup>82</sup>

Ridgway, the Colonial Office Press Officer, also added his voice to the argument for a more vigorous attitude to propaganda. He argued that the Colonial Office's position 'that the less said about our Colonial Empire the better' was 'hardly sound'. Ridgway argued that much depended on how 'propaganda' was defined. He deplored the Colonial Office attitude that all 'propaganda' activity was 'invidious' when the only example provided was 'Continental' propaganda with its connotations of 'ex-parte statements with the customary suppressions and suggestions'. At the very least the Colonial Office could give out 'accurate and prompt information' on matters of public interest particularly when 'distorted or ill-founded views or misstatements of fact' were published. He continued that the 'British Colonial Empire might seem sufficiently large and important enough to preclude any hope of imitating the proverbial characteristics of the ostrich'. With all the problems faced by the British in her colonies 'the right kind of propaganda or information pointing to our passionate adherence to the principles of trusteeship' was therefore particularly desirable.<sup>83</sup>

A more pro-active public relations policy of educating the British public about the empire could also aid the task of marketing colonial produce by creating a public opinion which would be more receptive to the advertising campaigns for particular colonial produce and industries. At a meeting of the CEMB Board of Directors in July 1938 it was decided however to constitute a Propaganda and Publicity Sub-Committee. At this sub-committee's first meeting in October 1938, Sir William Crawford, the director of Crawford's Advertising Agency argued that a public opinion which was imperially minded was required before any commercial propaganda about the empire could be successful

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<sup>82</sup> MacDonald quoted in Havinden and Meredith, op.cit., p.200.

<sup>83</sup> PRO, CO323/1615/16, memorandum by Ridgway, 20 June 1938.



in Britain:

the first essential was to create a background as a basis for detailed propaganda for this purpose [advertising for coffee and fruits] he thought that the Board should concentrate on educational propaganda designed to stimulate interest and some knowledge of the countries composing the Colonial Dependencies, and the place which those Dependencies occupied in the framework of the whole Empire.<sup>84</sup>

The Chairman of this committee, Peter Cadbury, however, summed up the general view of the committee that while this long-term educative propaganda would be valuable it was more necessary to 'satisfy the immediate requirements of the Colonial trade'.<sup>85</sup>

Lord Dufferin, who on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was overall chairman of the CEMB, thought that insufficient attention had been given to 'making some sort of effective contact with the large consumers and potential consumers of Colonial produce'. And while he recognised that colonial produce had perhaps little direct consumer appeal, he 'attached considerable importance to the value of "educational" propaganda' particularly against a background of the interest expressed by the public in the affairs of the Colonial Dependencies.<sup>86</sup> However the CEMB was not perhaps the forum for the initiation of long-term educative propaganda about the British empire. Propaganda was still a luxury which would not be paid for out of imperial funds.

It was in one area of the CEMB's activities that the two views of the future of imperial publicity came into conflict and help us to understand the debate on colonial propaganda on the eve of the Second World War. The CEMB was responsible for preparing the Colonial empire's exhibit for the New York World's Fair in 1939. The Secretary of State for the Colonies had made a special request that the colonial governments should make a contribution to this

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<sup>84</sup> PRO, CO852/171/4, record of the Propaganda and Publicity Committee of the CEMB, 13 October 1938.

<sup>85</sup> ibid.

<sup>86</sup> PRO, CO852/171/4, meeting of the CEMB, November 1938.

exhibition for reasons of trade and high policy:

there is some reason to regard participation in the New York World's Fair of 1939 in a particularly favourable light. The United States of America are one of the largest customers of the British Colonial Empire, and apart from that there are political reasons ... which make it clearly desirable to maintain the closest and most intimate relations between these two great communities.<sup>87</sup>

The initial reaction of the colonial governments was disappointing, but following a second plea by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in April 1938 some reconsidered. As ever the decision of the colonial governments to participate was governed by financial considerations.<sup>88</sup>

Moreover the very nature of the colonial exhibit was questioned. In July 1938 Dr. Paterson, on leave from the Colonial Service in Kenya spoke to Sir Arthur Dawe\*, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and head of the Africa Division, about the need to project Britain's achievements not merely in the commercial field but in bringing civilisation to the colonies. Paterson had been impressed by the United Kingdom exhibit at the Glasgow Exhibition which gave prominence to social services at home.<sup>89</sup> Dawe agreed there was a good case to be made to 'illustrate the development of the native through health, education and other social services'.<sup>90</sup> Gerard Clauson\*, Assistant Secretary of State in the Economic Department disagreed. Clauson found the U.K. health exhibit at Glasgow 'very dull and rather unpleasant'. While he recognised that it was the job of the Ministry of Health to 'sell' health and physical fitness at home and thus to the majority of visitors to the Exhibition, there was no

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<sup>87</sup> PRO, C0323/1501/4, circular despatch, 4 November 1937.

<sup>88</sup> PRO, C0852/188/1.

<sup>89</sup> PRO, C0852/188/5, Paterson to Dawe, 22 July 1938. Dr. Paterson had recently shown an exhibit of his photographs showing his medical work in Kenya at the Imperial Institute and was as Parkinson noted 'obsessed with this subject', C0852/188/5, minute by Parkinson, 19 October 1938.

<sup>90</sup> PRO, C0852/188/5, minute by Dawe, 8 August 1938.



'analogy' for the colonial empire. In addition Clauson had a practical objection to this kind of propaganda: finance,

the Colonial Dependencies have little enough money as it is to spend on social services. They certainly have none to spare to advertise those services in this country. It would be absolutely unproductive expenditure, sheer waste, and hardly one inhabitant of the Colonial Empire would be influenced by it to become 'health-minded'. If more money is to be found for the social services of the Colonial Empire it can only come out of the income of the community, and that can be increased only by pushing trade. Thus even from the point of view of the social services themselves the increase of colonial trade is a desirable end to pursue.<sup>91</sup>

On the other hand, John Calder\*, Assistant Secretary in the Economics Department and subsequent Crown Agent for the Colonies, argued against throwing the baby out with the bath water, noting it was all 'a matter of degree'.<sup>92</sup> Dawe agreed and put the question into the context of international considerations and the help it could provide for Britain's case against German colonial claims. He argued that a social services exhibit would be useful to show to the world that Britain's colonial policy 'covers not only commercial development but also the advancement of the native through social services'. While he recognised there was much to be done in the future, where the Colonial Office failed was in not putting across 'to the public mind what is being done' already.<sup>93</sup>

To this internal debate was added powerful voices from outside the Colonial Office. Lord De La Warr\*, the Lord Privy Seal and former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1936-7, wrote to Malcolm MacDonald to urge the projection of the British colonial empire in a more favourable light. Conscious of the public spotlight the colonies had attracted in recent times and the 'press forecasts' that 'the Colonial Question belongs to 1939' he thought the colonial pavilion at the New York World's Fair

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<sup>91</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, minute by Clauson, 10 August 1938.

<sup>92</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, minute by Calder, 11 August 1938.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, minute by Dawe, 12 August 1938.

provided the perfect opportunity to present what Britain was doing on 'a constructive basis'. It would be a corrective to the usual colonial exhibits, like the recent one in Glasgow which, he thought, had been 'all trade and production'. Not least he feared Britain's case being overwhelmed by anticipated demonstrations by the French, Italians, Dutch and Americans 'of what blessings they bring to their tropical dependencies'. What was needed was foresight and vision to

see beyond sisal and cocoa and realise that in the near future it is going to be a matter of major policy to present our Colonial Administration in its most favourable light.<sup>94</sup>

MacDonald agreed, and minuted 'I think Lord De La Warr is absolutely right'. No sooner had Lord De La Warr made his interjection another voice was heard in the shape of the British Ambassador-designate to the United States, Lord Lothian\*, which echoed his argument. Lothian, with wide experience in Indian affairs and the first editor of the Round Table, understood from others' criticisms that the colonial exhibit at the Glasgow exhibition, a purely commercial display, was 'lamentable. Something different was needed in New York, 'of the humanitarian and social services aspect of our Colonial Empire' with an eye firmly fixed on the American audience with its 'constant prejudice' against British imperialism. It would help Britain's case in relation to Germany's,

this exhibition affords a marvelous opportunity of bringing home to the Americans that Britain is doing in Africa the kind of work of which they pride themselves on having done in the Philippines, etc., for example, education, health, hospitals, self-government - all the things, in fact, which they will take for granted that Hitler won't do.

Lothian wanted the CEMB's exhibitions sub-committee under the chairmanship of Sir Harry Lindsay\*, the director of the Imperial Institute, to abandon their plans for a purely commercial exhibit. He suggested they should follow the advice of Lord Hailey\* whose African Survey was due out the following week and take the lead in planning 'a really

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<sup>94</sup> PRO, C0852/188/5, De La Warr to MacDonald, 19 October 1938.



valuable piece of propaganda for the British Empire at a very critical moment'.<sup>95</sup>

Critics of the 'prestige' type of exhibits maintained their reservations on financial grounds. Clauson felt he had to 'pipe up' in defence of exhibits of the Glasgow variety for 'the idea of using the Colonial tax-payers money to advertise the moral grandeur of HMG is quite a novel one', and Sir Henry Moore\*, former Governor of Sierra Leone and Assistant Under-Secretary of State, noted that colonial governments had 'lost faith' in the commercial value of exhibitions and this led him to believe that if exhibitions were to be staged with no immediate and obvious financial benefit the colonial governors 'would be inclined to say that HMG should foot the bill'.<sup>96</sup>

The 'tone' of the colonial exhibit to the New York World's Fair was altered to be a prestige exhibit. Lord Dufferin consulted Lord Hailey about themes.<sup>97</sup> The exhibit sent to New York was a composite picture of the colonial empire of maps, pictures of social progress, administration, schools, hospitals, malarial precautions in the form of dioramas and a giant 6 foot by 4 foot book which automatically turned the pages, of a frieze of colonial badges, of postage stamps, of an information bureau with literature on the empire but no exhibits of a

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<sup>95</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, Lothian to MacDonald, 2 November 1938 also quoted in Nicholas Cull, Selling War: the British Propaganda Campaign Against American Neutrality in World War II (Oxford, 1995), p.27. Lord Dufferin also received a letter from Harold Nicolson, apologising for being an 'interfering cove' and asking him to consider the merits of an exhibit in New York emphasising the positive work done by HMG in the colonial empire hoping to avoid the embarrassment that a Parliamentary Question would involve to his friend on the subject. 'Basil' was able to reassure him that it would emphasise the 'social' rather than the 'sisal' side of colonial development, CO852/188/5, Nicolson to Dufferin, 1 December 1938 and Dufferin to Nicolson, 15 December 1938.

<sup>96</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, Clauson to Moore and Dufferin and Ava, 11 November 1938 and minute by Moore, 14 November 1938.

<sup>97</sup> PRO, CO852/188/5, minute by Dufferin, 24 November 1938.

trade or commercial nature.<sup>98</sup> Sir William McLean\*, the former Egyptian Civil Service Officer, Conservative M.P., honorary liaison officer with the Houses of Lords and Commons, adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on economic and social development and 'safe' pair of hands, was to go to New York to sit on an enquiry desk. It was significant in the debate over public relations as it represented a rare example of the Colonial Office being pro-active and non-commercial. As Lord Dufferin commented: 'the truth is that for once we thought of the idea before our critics'.<sup>99</sup>

The CEMB had also accepted that in order to maximise the purchase of colonial produce by the British public, 'carefully planned educational propoganda to familiarise the public with the Colonial Empire' was necessary. Steps taken by early 1939 included an illustrated book in 'popular' style telling the story of the history and the development of the colonial empire. Its purpose was

to create a greater public knowledge of and interest in the affairs of the Colonial Dependencies and to prepare the ground for the reception by the public at a later stage of propoganda and publicity directed solely towards increasing demand for specific colonial products.<sup>100</sup>

The CEMB commissioned a film directed by Basil Wright which became Men of Africa to act as a 'background' film to 'a series of shorter films depicting the life and industries of individual dependencies'; it also provided 400 pounds to purchase new prints of films held in the film library of the Imperial Institute to be made available to schools,

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<sup>98</sup> For details on the British pavilion exhibit at the Fair c.f. Cull, op.cit., pp.26-8. As Lord Dufferin explained 'no sample tins of pineapples to distract the visitor's mind from the thoughts of Empire and Responsibility and Democracy', C0852/188/5, Dufferin to Nicolson, 15 December 1938.

<sup>99</sup> PRO, C0323/1745/14, minute by Sabine, 3 February 1940; C0852/188/5, Dufferin to Nicolson, 15 December 1938.

<sup>100</sup> PRO, C0852/227/11, Report of the work of the CEMB, October 1937 to March 1939.



educational and commercial bodies.<sup>101</sup>

The decision to contribute a colonial 'prestige' exhibit to the New York World's Fair represented an important shift away from official colonial trade propaganda and a recognition that the Colonial Office no longer enjoyed the luxury of conducting its affairs outside the public gaze. But this can be regarded as a 'one-off'. The Colonial Office had been represented on the Vansittart Committee for the Co-ordination of Publicity Abroad<sup>102</sup> by Sir John Shuckburgh, but there was little Colonial Office input or action taken as the main Colonial Office interest in this Committee's activities was limited to the Near East.<sup>103</sup> Following a Cabinet decision to initiate in peacetime 'a more active policy of publicity overseas' and the creation of the Treasury's Overseas and Emergency Publicity Expenditure Committee proposals were made to strengthen the Foreign Office News Department. The Colonial Office was asked to consider its position on creating an organisation 'to further publicity measures in peace in the Colonial Empire'. Malcolm MacDonald thought there was at that time 'no grounds for considering any such organisation' and instead the Colonial Office would maintain close touch with the FOND and where appropriate would use material produced by them to distribute to colonial governments to use in countering foreign propaganda.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> ibid. The film Men of Africa and the book were also used at the New York World's Fair. For Men of Africa, c.f. chapter three.

<sup>102</sup> C.f. Taylor, Projection of Britain, chapter six, 'The Vansittart for the Co-ordination of British Publicity Abroad', pp.216-259. Chaired by the government's Chief Diplomatic Adviser, Sir Robert Vansittart, this Committee announced in the House of Commons in February 1938 represented an attempt establish a central co-ordinating body to bring together all government departments and semi-official agencies engaged in propaganda overseas.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, CO323/1615/1, Parkinson to Vansittart, 15 February 1938 and minute by Bowyer, 28 January 1938.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, CP(39)127, 2 June 1939 and minute by Lee, 8 June 1939.

However quite independently of the decision not to create an organisation to project the colonial empire overseas and in the colonies themselves, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had initiated discussions within the Colonial Office to establish a 'Public Relations Department' to project the colonial empire to the British public. The object would be to 'provide suitable publicity for the Colonial Office and the Colonies ... and so create informed opinion'.<sup>105</sup> This initiative was stillborn because of the outbreak of the war and was then initially kept on a back-burner until the disagreements with the MOI over the conduct of and responsibility for empire publicity re-opened the question.

Planning for wartime publicity itself had begun secretly in October 1935 with the establishment of a subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence.<sup>106</sup> This subcommittee of the CID met only six times over the next four years and the actual planning was left to another subcommittee chaired by Rex Leeper head of the FOND. One of the most important decisions taken was to establish a separate Ministry of Information for the conduct of British propaganda during a future war. Inevitably an element of confusion was produced over the relationship between this shadow centralised organisation and the publicity agencies which already existed in Whitehall. Departments were allowed to keep their own Press Officers and parallel organisations led to future problems of an administrative nature. Preparations were made to establish an Empire Division at the MOI which was markedly different to the haphazard and uncoordinated work about the empire during the First World War. The colonial empire was to be treated differently to the Dominions and this was reflected in the

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<sup>105</sup> PRO, CO323/1160/10, Parkinson to Waterfield, 10 June 1939.

<sup>106</sup> For details on the establishment of the MOI c.f. Michael Balfour, Propaganda in War, 1939-45 (London, 1979), pp.53-71; Taylor, Projection of Britain, pp.260-292 and Temple Wilcox, 'Projection or Publicity? Rival Concepts in the Pre-War Planning of the British Ministry of Information', Journal of Contemporary History, 18, 1983.



organisation of the Empire Division where separate Sections were planned for India and Burma, the Dominions and the Colonies.<sup>107</sup> Within the Colonial Section of the Empire Division it was proposed that the colonial empire could be grouped into geographical areas with appropriate specialists allotted to each area. The Colonial Office cooperated with the staff earmarked for the Empire Division of the MOI and circular despatches were sent to the colonial governments communicating the plans made by the shadow MOI.<sup>108</sup> It is interesting to note that the staff of the CEMB were not allotted to the Empire Division within this shadow MOI organisation and were transferred to the Ministry of Economic Warfare once the war broke out.<sup>109</sup>

The Colonial Office urged the colonial governments to appoint Information Officers in their colonies and already the complicated relationship and division of responsibilities which characterised the relationship between the MOI and the Colonial Office during the first part of the war could be seen. The Information Officer would 'be responsible to the Ministry of Information but in each territory would act under the authority of, and in consultation with, the Colonial Government concerned'.<sup>110</sup> In order to facilitate cooperation between the MOI and the Colonial Office, a Colonial Office official would be seconded to the Colonial Section of the Empire Division.

#### The Colonial Office and Attitudes to Propaganda During the Second World War

War propaganda will never provide a basis on which to reconstruct the world of the future. It may win the

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<sup>107</sup> C.f. PRO/INF1/28/file.

<sup>108</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, minute by Lee, 8 June 1939. For details of the circular despatches c.f. chapter 1 below.

<sup>109</sup> PRO, CO878/26, Establishment Branch notice no.141, 13 September 1939.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, circular despatch, 12 August 1939.

war but it will not win the peace.<sup>111</sup>

Had not the outbreak of the Second World War intervened it would be reasonable to assume that Malcolm MacDonald's plans for the creation of a Public Relations Department would have been carried forward earlier than 1942. As Sir John Shuckburgh wrote, the need for supplementing the work of the Colonial Office by the appointment of a Public Relations Officer had been recognised 'for some time past and was under active consideration during the months that preceded the outbreak of the war'.<sup>112</sup> However the immediate establishment of the MOI following the outbreak of hostilities put these plans into abeyance. As far as the Colonial Office and the war propaganda effort was concerned, the first priority was to establish liaison machinery with the Colonial Section of the Empire Division of the MOI where the organisation of colonial publicity was situated. It was the antagonistic relationship between the MOI and the Colonial Office which proved to be a catalyst for the creation of a Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> PRO, CO875/11/1, 'Colonial Propaganda - Aims and Policy' memorandum by Edmett, 6 August 1941, also quoted in Smyth, 'Britain's African Colonies ...', p.73.

<sup>112</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.180.

<sup>113</sup> Hilton Poynton\* of the Defence Department, was appointed MOI-CO Liaison Officer and George Seel\* was seconded to the Colonial Section at the MOI. From January 1940 the CO-MOI Liaison Officer was Noel Sabine. Little is known about Sabine. He does not have a biography in the Colonial Office List as it was not printed during the war and before the war he would have needed to have served for ten years in order to qualify. In September 1939 Sabine was seconded to the Defence Department of the Colonial Office from service in Kenya where he joined the Colonial Service in 1930 as a Cadet. In 1934 he became a District Officer and gained administrative experience as an Assistant Secretary in the Kenya Secretariat in Nairobi. From early April 1940 Sabine became responsible for all Colonial Office publicity and public relations questions and Ernest Sabben-Clare\*, former District Officer in Tanganyika, became the Liaison Officer. Sabine's area of work was formally recognised when he was appointed Public Relations Officer on 22 July 1940, PRO, CO878/26, Establishment Branch Notices, no.146, 16 September 1939; no.1, 1 January 1940; no.42, 9 April 1940; and no.108, 22 July 1940.



Almost immediately after war broke out the two Ministries were locked in argument over who should control propaganda policy.<sup>114</sup> In Colonial Office files a catalogue of jibes complaining of the lack of specialist experience of the empire publicists in the MOI is evident. For example, Professor Harlow had prepared a War Publicity Handbook to be distributed as guidance for Information Officers in the colonies. It recommended themes for speakers which would draw attention to Britain's record in suppressing the slave trade and defending political freedoms. Britain was to be portrayed as 'the liberator and protector of Africans throughout the world', the 'greatest protagonist on behalf of "Africa for the Africans" ... ensuring that the future of Africa will ultimately be in the hands of Africans'. Britain's record by implication was compared favourably to Germany's: 'this is a war of liberty, a war to save small weak races from being absorbed or exploited by Nazi Germany ... Germany has clamoured for a colonial empire of her own. Why? In order to make money out of it'.<sup>115</sup> The Handbook produced a chorus of disapproval in the Colonial Office. In the Social Services Department, John Keith\*, a former District Commissioner from Northern Rhodesia whose primary expertise was in African education, complained that 'all this stuff about the slave trade cuts no ice', that comparisons between Britain and Germany could be 'easily counteracted by stuff about British misdoings' and that any 'talk about freedom, especially political freedom, is dangerous stuff which could play into the hands of counter-propagandists'.<sup>116</sup> Sir Arthur Dawe, head of the Africa Division, in his usual trenchant style, commented:

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<sup>114</sup> The Colonial Office was not alone in finding fault with the MOI, for instance the service departments argued with the MOI over censorship questions and the Foreign Office over responsibilities for propaganda policy overseas, c.f. Balfour, passim.

<sup>115</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/15, memo. no. 323, 'War Publicity Handbook', undated.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/15, minute by Keith, 16 September 1939.

alien rule is hard to bear and it is not always politic for the ruler to ooze with self-righteousness ... often a mistake in propaganda to put too high a moral polish on everything we do. Backward races may be ignorant but they are often very shrewd.

The general propaganda guidelines had been established and Dawe preferred to leave the details to the men on the spot who 'were best able to handle their people'. More worrying was that the author of the Handbook, Professor Harlow, was in charge of the Colonial Section. According to Dawe he was a total 'misfit' as he was 'high-minded, bookish and inexperienced'.<sup>117</sup> More succinctly Sir Henry Moore stated: 'the best propaganda we can use is to keep wages up and bellies full'.<sup>118</sup>

Others in the Colonial Office resented being forced to run in a 'three legged race' tied to the MOI.<sup>119</sup> As the department responsible for British propaganda in the Second World War the MOI was the fund-holder for imperial propaganda and the Colonial Office only had the power of veto in this circumstance because it had to depend on persuading the MOI to pursue Colonial Office ends. The situation would have been different had the Colonial Office established its own public relations organisation before the war and secured its own funding from the Treasury on the Colonial and Middle Eastern Vote; this would have, to some extent, made it independent of the MOI in wartime.

Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, even proposed the idea of scrapping the Colonial Section of the Ministry of Information and suggested that its activities should be undertaken by a public relations department in the Colonial Office, which in turn would use the facilities of the production divisions of the Ministry

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<sup>117</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/15, minute by Dawe, 25 September 1939.

<sup>118</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/15, minute by Moore, 19 September 1939. Following Colonial Office representations the Handbook was abandoned and Dawe minuted that the Colonial Office file containing the criticisms of it should 'on no account go to the MOI', PRO, C0323/1660/15, minute by Dawe, 29 September 1939.

<sup>119</sup> PRO, C0875/5/6, memorandum by Edmett, 'imperial propaganda', undated.



of Information. As the Colonial Office insisted that the Secretary of State for the Colonies could not waive his responsibility for all questions of policy in colonial territories, a compromise (or even a victory given the lowliness of the Colonial Office in the Whitehall pecking order) was reached whereby he and not the Minister of Information would bear the ultimate responsibility for colonial publicity policy and be the final adjudicator over any point of disagreement. Correspondence between the Ministry of Information and Information Officers in the colonies would be conducted through the Colonial Office. Therefore, although publicity and propaganda activity remained the responsibility of the Minister of Information in theory no material was sent to the colonies without Colonial Office agreement.<sup>120</sup>

Following the resolution of the 'responsibility' question the Secretary of State for the Colonies turned his attention to the role of the Colonial Office in initiating empire propaganda. In early 1940 Malcolm MacDonald was dissatisfied with the essentially passive role the Colonial Office had hitherto adopted in propaganda questions; it was 'not enough' for the Colonial Office to 'help the MOI when they ask for it' or to be confined to merely 'vetting' material produced in the MOI. Following a meeting with Lord Reith\*, the Minister of Information and Lord Halifax\*, the Foreign Secretary, to discuss the Report of the West Indies Royal Commission, MacDonald saw the pressing need to intensify the propaganda effort about the empire. Instead of its passive function the Colonial Office should have ideas of its own as to what would be 'useful propaganda' and should bring ideas spontaneously to the notice of the Ministry [of Information].<sup>121</sup>

MacDonald's dissatisfaction with the present situation initiated a Colonial Office review of propaganda activities and proposals for the best way forward in the future. Noel Sabine the Colonial Office Liaison Officer with the MOI

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<sup>120</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.179.

<sup>121</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, Carstairs to Sabine, 11 January 1940.

thought the Colonial Office should tread carefully. Propaganda, he noted, had been described as the art of 'casting imitation pearls before real swine' and in the present war was judged not on its truth or falsehood,

but (a) on its power to strike a blow at, or rebut the charges of an enemy, (b) on its plausibility and (c) according to the manner in which it fits into the pattern of general propaganda policy of the government concerned.<sup>122</sup>

The Colonial Office should not, argued Sabine, follow the German and Italian examples. On the one hand German propaganda was negative and attempted to 'build bricks without straw' by conveying 'that Germany was successful at administering her colonies'. It condemned the 'imperialistic' actions of its opponents and by doing so denied German responsibility 'for promoting the present war, by stating categorically and repeatedly that the allies provoked it'. Italian propaganda followed German lines but also glamourised Italian activities.

Thus the Italian Abyssinian campaign becomes a kind of crusade; and a number of Italian peasants migrating (perhaps with some reluctance) to Libya with a grant in aid of a few lira and a number of pigs, are addressed by a leader from a rostrum shaped like the prow of a battleship, and told they are 'fulfilling the imperial destiny of greater Italy'.<sup>123</sup>

British propaganda about the empire should be different and realistic; the more far fetched propaganda lies should be scotched ruthlessly and be conducted against a background of 'positive propaganda telling of our achievements, our methods and our problems' (avoiding, it went without saying, the posturings and exaggerations apparent in enemy propaganda). Realism and the 'putting out of straight facts and honest commonsense conclusions' would always be more convincing than the fare of enemy propaganda with its special pleading, tortuous reasoning and laborious historical documentation [which] seeks to prove that wrong is right, that war is not war and that aggression is pacification, ad nauseam for 24 hours a day.

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<sup>122</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, minute by Sabine, 12 January 1940.

<sup>123</sup> ibid.



Sabine suggested that even criticism of Britain's colonial administration could be turned to good account if handled carefully and publicising the freedoms enjoyed by colonial peoples under British rule contrasted with the freedoms enjoyed by the peoples living under the rule of the enemy, for example a hypothetical case for a broadcast 'feature' programme was proposed:

There is in particular great scope for contrasting the size, might and dignity of the Empire with its refusal to take advantage of these powers to crush opposition and stifle criticism ... take the case of a small Colonial Dependency, a few of the more advanced inhabitants of which regard a law introduced by the Governor as being prejudicial to what they regard as their proper liberties; some local agitation may take place and some criticism of the Government's policy may be ventilated in Parliament. These facts are interpreted as hostile propaganda without any consciousness or often without any appearance of inconsistency as evidence that British rule is (a) too tyrannical and (b) too weak and that in any case it leads to trouble and unrest; no doubt many people believe this. This problem is not the end of the story however; the agitators or apostles of liberty are not put in concentration camps, called internal enemies of the state or even murdered: what may easily happen is that they have amicable interviews with the Governor or the Secretary of State at which MPs or Trade Union leaders may be represented. Eventually a compromise, more or less successful is worked out; and the moral is that the big power has treated with the little power on terms of equality and by the exercise of reason and commonsense instead of the use of force, of which a large part of this world is heavily sick. By the use of this sort of treatment even the existence of grievances, out of which the enemy, in the absence of effective propaganda, could make capital, is turned to good account; and it leads back to the theme that while the people of the Empire may criticise they know their grievances will be discussed and remedied if possible, and they know how to make the choice between our own rule and Nazi rule.<sup>124</sup>

In the spirit of Sabine's recommendations MacDonald wrote to Reith urging the adoption of the theme of 'constructive achievement' in the colonial field:

We are not oppressors, nor are we weak and inefficient administrators; we keep a large number of people over a good portion of the earth's surface in a condition of good order and contentment; we realize that much remains to be done, but we assert at the same time that a very great deal has been accomplished in the

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<sup>124</sup> ibid.

spheres of administration and justice, education, health and general social progress.<sup>125</sup>

Reith promised to discuss MOI plans for long-term publicity about the empire and the possible strengthening of machinery to conduct this new effort. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned the planned appointment of a Public Relations Officer would, as directed by MacDonald, strengthen the Colonial Office side.<sup>126</sup>

Preparing publicity for the introduction of the new Colonial Development and Welfare Legislation in February 1940 proved to be a valuable learning curve for the Colonial Office in the art of public relations. The new Act with its promise of five million pounds a year for the next ten years broke away from the previous 1929 Colonial Development Act with the abandonment of the principle of self-supporting colonies and its specific denunciation of the 1929 Act's stipulation that its aim should be 'to promote the commerce with or industry in the United Kingdom'. Instead the new Act had as its 'primary purpose ... to promote the prosperity and happiness of the Colonial Empire'.<sup>127</sup> Both the Colonial Office and Ministry of Information had been in favour of publishing the Report of the West Indies Royal Commission simultaneously with the White Paper on development legislation as an earnest of British intentions to act on the criticisms contained in the Report. The Secretary of State for the Colonies himself became involved with efforts to publicise the Report and White Paper by trying to arrange for Lord Moyne\*, the Chairman of the Royal Commission, to broadcast on the BBC on the day of publication.<sup>128</sup> Sabine coordinated the publicity for the Report and the

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<sup>125</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, MacDonald to Reith, 17 January 1940.

<sup>126</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, Reith to MacDonald, 25 January 1940 and minute by MacDonald, undated.

<sup>127</sup> Constantine, The Making of British Colonial Development ..., p.258.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, CO323/1651/19, minute by MacDonald, 4 December 1939.



announcement of the new policy. He prepared circular telegrams to be sent to the colonies and 'Empax' information telegrams for overseas distribution, he organising press conferences and facilities for empire and home press, cooperation with the BBC for programmes on both the Empire and Home services. Sabine also prepared briefing papers for the press conferences on the 'line' to be adopted of showing the continuity in colonial policy. It would play down the White Paper as a 'revolution', emphasise that the policy was being adopted in spite of and not because of the war and that it was a worthy commitment even though it represented a further drain on Britain's already scarce resources,

it is true that we are facing unprecedented calls on our resources. This fact should not prevent us from devoting part of those resources to fulfil the obligations we have voluntarily assumed ... just because we are at war we are not going to be panicked out of taking steps to put and keep our house in order.<sup>129</sup>

In Cabinet however the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain convinced his colleagues that the publication of the report of the West Indies Royal Commission would be dangerous because of the effect it could have in the United States and other neutral countries 'leading to a general revision of opinion among those who had hitherto thought of Britain as a leading Colonial Power'.<sup>130</sup> MacDonald, not content with this situation, managed to persuade his Cabinet colleagues that the recommendations of the Report could be published to allay public suspicions. Privately the Press could be told, 'while we would not have objected to the Report if taken as a whole, the use by the enemy of selected extracts might have been damaging to us'.<sup>131</sup>

The Report of the West Indies Royal Commission was not published until after the war in 1945. Its recommendations were published on the same day as the White Paper on Colonial Development and Welfare with the additional

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<sup>129</sup> PRO, CO323/1745/14, memorandum by Sabine, undated.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, CAB65/5, WM(40)27, 30 January 1940.

<sup>131</sup> PRO, CAB65/5, WM(40)42, 15 February 1940.

commitment to spend 1,400,000 pounds a year in the West Indies alone. The Colonial Office could not have asked for more in the reception of the White Paper and the non-publication of the Royal Commission Report which reproduced the government 'line' faithfully. The Daily Mail's report was typical of British press reaction:

Our Colonies need help, and Britain will give that help. The war has not been made an excuse for postponing necessary measures.

That is the most encouraging fact in the new scheme of Colonial assistance announced yesterday. While we are spending colossal sums in the effort to beat Germany, we can still spare five million pounds a year to raise the standard of living of our overseas communities ...

Note, too, that these long term plans budget for ten years ahead - twenty years in the case of the West Indies. This calm faith in our future is enormously encouraging at a time when the Empire is facing the most perilous days in its history.

The state of the Colonies, and in particular the West Indies has been a reproach to our Imperial name ... But the Germans can understand neither frankness nor our enlightened methods of administration. There are no slaves, pogroms or Gestapos, no Polands or Bohemias in the British Empire ...

The Colonies are helping magnificently in the war. But this assistance is not a reward for that effort. It would have been given war or no war.<sup>132</sup>

Prior to the appointment of a Public Relations Officer in July 1940, the Colonial Office discussed the demarcation line between what the activities of the Colonial Office would be and the work of the MOI. In the wake of the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act the time was ripe for the Colonial Office themselves to seize the initiative in the empire publicity field and rid themselves of their previous 'defensive attitude' and pave the way for 'a campaign of positive informative publicity'. The Colonial Office would need to persuade the MOI that the awakening of British pride in their empire was a 'legitimate propaganda aim'. Above all, as Sabine noted, the MOI considered empire publicity in a very specific context 'as part of the country's war propaganda effort'. As part of the war propaganda effort the British public were encouraged to take pride in the colonial war effort and overseas would be

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<sup>132</sup> The Daily Mail, 21 February 1940.



impressed by the humanity, resources and solidarity of the British colonial empire and the respect of the principle of trusteeship.<sup>133</sup> The projected Public Relations Department was to fight the British public's ignorance and 'partially informed prejudice'. This was to be a long-term activity, 'not properly a war measure'. Its work would be more 'informative' than 'propagandist' and would concentrate mainly on publicising the nature of the Colonial empire at home. Naturally there would be a degree of overlap between the war propaganda and public relations activities of the two departments because their objectives were broadly similar: 'informing the British public of the work of the Empire and bringing about a fuller realization of their responsibilities in this regard', was Sabine argued 'a valid war aim'.<sup>134</sup>

However in spite of Sabine's recommendations for Colonial Office public relations the Colonial Office continued, for the time being, to act as little more than a 'post office' and adviser for the MOI and as a censor of propaganda produced by the MOI, this caused frustration in the Ministry as their proposals 'were too apt to be turned down by the Colonial Office'.<sup>135</sup> In these circumstances the MOI tried to obtain Colonial Office acceptance of the principle that the MOI had the final authority on all questions of propaganda. It wished to correspond with Information Officers in the colonies direct instead of through the Colonial Office.<sup>136</sup> This produced a backlash of criticism in the Colonial Office against renewed MOI attempts to encroach on areas of the Secretary of State's responsibilities and against the Colonial Section's inappropriate attitude to propaganda in the colonies. To the point as ever, Sir Arthur Dawe wrote:

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<sup>133</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, minute by Sabine, 18 March 1940.

<sup>134</sup> ibid.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, Sabben-Clare to Sabine, 27 June 1940 and Shuckburgh to Sabine, 26 June 1940.

<sup>136</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, Shuckburgh to Sabine, 26 June 1940.

this section is so poor in personnel and so ill-equipped that it inspires no confidence. It is really impossible for this little group of professors and amateurs to be in a position to dictate from Bloomsbury to the Secretary of State, the Colonial governors and all their experienced officials on matters of propaganda in the Colonies. Their ideas are hopelessly conventional and commonplace. Their main stock-in-trade is the cliches of political appeal appropriate to Anglo-Saxon democracy. They seem to be quite incapable of making an imaginative leap to understand that this sort of stuff is not always appropriate to the varied coloured races in the Colonial Empire. What we want is something much more astute, realistic and forceful.<sup>137</sup>

Shuckburgh was not disposed to echo Dawe's criticism and reminded his colleague that there was at least one reliable man among the 'amateurs' at the MOI in the person of Nicholson a former Colonial Secretary in Cyprus. Notwithstanding this quibble Shuckburgh pointed to the advantage that a cooperative attitude could bring. As long as the principle of the Colonial Office retaining the decisive word on colonial propaganda was maintained the Colonial Office could have no objections to the MOI corresponding directly with the Information Officers in the field on routine matters.<sup>138</sup>

As far as public relations in the Colonial Office were concerned the Secretary of State was having trouble in finding a suitable man to become his Public Relations Officer. In the meantime he was 'very anxious to get on with the development of the Public Relations side' of the Colonial Office and so set up an advisory committee on public relations. He invited Gervas Huxley, formerly of the EMB and subsequently director of the Empire Division at the MOI, Sir Harry Lindsay, director of the Imperial Institute and Harold Nicolson\*, MP and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the MOI to become members.<sup>139</sup> This advisory committee did not proceed beyond the circulation

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<sup>137</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, minute by Dawe, 3 July 1940.

<sup>138</sup> PRO, CO323/1740/62, Dawe to Parkinson, 5 July 1940. MacDonald agreed, CO323/1740/62, minute by Parkinson, 11 July 1940.

<sup>139</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, MacDonald to Huxley, 21 March 1940.



of papers prepared by Sabine in his capacity as the officer in the Colonial Office responsible for propaganda and publicity questions. Sabine's papers and proposals for taking a more positive approach to public relations were praised in the Office<sup>140</sup> and seem to have made him the obvious, or perhaps the only, choice for Public Relations Officer.

Sabine was duly appointed Public Relations Officer in July.<sup>141</sup> This decision then can be seen as the result of both positive and negative factors. On the one hand the perceived need, articulated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies himself, to educate the British public, regardless of the war, about their empire and to capitalise on the opportunities provided by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. On the other hand the power struggle between the Ministry of Information and the Colonial Office over the responsibilities for colonial propaganda. However the appointment of Sabine as Public Relations Officer by no means implied that the Colonial Office had committed itself fully to a positive publicity policy or that public relations activities had received universal support within the Colonial Office. In view of the practical dependence on the production organisations within the MOI there was only so much that an individual Public Relations Officer could achieve independently. He needed MOI and Colonial Office support for widening empire propaganda to incorporate public relations activities.

Sir Cosmo Parkinson\*, the former Permanent Under-Secretary of State, explained the difficulties faced by Sabine in his relations with other Colonial Office officials. The Public Relations Officer seemed to be resented by the rest of the Colonial Office and made 'extra work' for the other administrative officers. His inquisitiveness 'knew no bounds' and wanted to be "in"

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<sup>140</sup> C.f. for example PRO, C0323/1754/4, minute by Lord Dufferin, 25 April 1940.

<sup>141</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.180. But it was to be more than two years, before Sabine was given the rank of Assistant Secretary and a department of his own.

everything of importance, and to be there before things come to a head'. Parkinson hinted that Sabine's position could even have been a cause for jealousy as he had 'direct access to the Secretary of State'; this was necessary if he was to be successful in his task, but placed him in a 'special position different from that of the ordinary permanent official'. Parkinson's own ambivalence towards public relations was also apparent:

I remember once saying to the Public Relations Officer that there would never be any peace again in the Colonial Office until he had reverted to his previous job in the Administration of Kenya. For a moment he thought this was a serious remark, and he was bereft of speech - a rare thing in a public relations officer. Actually, there was an element of truth in what I said, if 'peace' were understood to mean fewer interruptions. But it would not make for a more peaceful life for the Secretary of State and the Colonial Office, if 'public relations' were closed down. They have come to stay in one form or another.<sup>142</sup>

A year later the Colonial Office was still trying to gain support within the Office and cooperation from the MOI to implement a long-term public relations campaign independent of but supplementary to the MOI's main activity of war propaganda. E.R. Edmett,<sup>143</sup> working in the Colonial Office as Liaison officer with the MOI, took up the cause of public relations and urged the Colonial Office to find its 'own lines of development', warning of the political dangers inherent in a failure to do so.<sup>144</sup> Combining both his experience as an officer in the field and his observations of the workings of the Colonial Office and the

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<sup>142</sup> Sir Cosmo Parkinson, The Colonial Office From Within 1909-1945 (London, 1947), p.68.

<sup>143</sup> Little is known about Edmett. He was a 'beachcomber' from the Colonial Administrative Service in the Gold Coast where he had started as a Cadet in 1934, becoming a District Commissioner the following year. He commenced duty in the Colonial Office on 8 January 1941 as a Temporary Assistant Principal and was assigned to the West Indian Department. In June 1941 he replaced Sabben-Clare as the Colonial Office-MOI Liaison Officer on Sabben-Clare's transfer to the Foreign Colonies Department, PRO, C0878/27, Establishments Branch Notice, no.3, 9 January 1941 and no.67, 14 June 1941.

<sup>144</sup> PRO, C0875/11/1, memorandum by Edmett, 6 August 1941.



MOI he not only dealt with the problems confronting the British empire, as he saw them in 1941, and their possible solutions, he also identified the very issues which, in spite of the subsequent public relations efforts made by the Colonial Office, arguably contributed to the end of the British empire in Africa. He recommended that the Colonial Office should attempt to disassociate themselves from the MOI's short-term 'win the war' propaganda. While he recognised that war propaganda was the propagandists' 'bread and butter', Edmett thought that it could not 'provide a constructive outlook' for the solution of Britain's colonial problems. Even this short-term propaganda campaign to win the war had been started too late. On the outbreak of war propaganda had been improvised but 'propaganda to win the war should have been started twenty years ago' because it 'takes decades for an idea to seep into the consciousness of the public'. Propaganda was not a 'stick which can be picked up and used at will': its effects were potentially dangerous. The kind of war propaganda produced by the MOI could even backfire and have future harmful effects because 'the partisanship, the reiteration of the enemies's brutalities, are bound to affect all but the most equable and objective minds'.<sup>145</sup>

The Colonial Office should not, Edmett argued, be bound by the constraints and dangers of the MOI's war propaganda; it should look to the future in which Britain's role in relation to her empire would be evolving. Edmett identified Africa in particular, where he had first-hand experience, as an area where there would be change. In tune with the new thinking within the Colonial Office about the purpose of colonial development policy and the increasingly interventionist role metropolitan Britain would in future adopt in social, economic and political developments, Edmett suggested that the British would cease to be merely administrators and would become advisers and organisers to aid Africans into accepting responsibility for their own affairs. Propaganda would have a central

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<sup>145</sup> ibid.

role to play in bringing about this change. It was not that Africans were 'sufficiently unintelligent to run their country' but that they simply 'do not understand our point of view, they do not undertake their responsibilities towards one another',

Only an educative propaganda campaign over a number of years will effect this. But no other method than propaganda will attain it, people cannot be administered into a state of responsibility, only educated to it.<sup>146</sup>

However he was under no illusion that propaganda was the universal panacea for colonial problems, as the example of the attitude of the enemy proved:

Do not let us fool ourselves that human beings are marionettes to be worked by propaganda. That belief has led the dictators to the abyss on the edge of which they are now standing. Do not believe that propaganda can create goodwill. It cannot.<sup>147</sup>

But propaganda could, he argued, be the means of 'expressing existing goodwill and of consolidating it'. Propaganda could 'put before people persuasively and continuously all the facts which it is vital that mankind must assimilate in order to deal with its problems'. This propaganda should be a continuous and long-term 'education in facts',

We are, as war shows, also at the mercy of our emotions and prejudices, and only a continuous exposition of all the facts of existence and a human sympathy in their presentation, will enable us and the races for whom we are supposedly trustee to form a balanced judgment without which we can never master our environment.

Perceptively, he laid down the challenge that the future of the British empire and even Britain's status as great power was dependent on the ability of the peoples of the empire to cooperate:

the races of the British Empire black and white must learn to understand, tolerate and respect each other. The present war has made this problem ripe for solution. Failing this we disintegrate, and the leadership of the world will be assumed by the American and Soviet federations. Either we solve the

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<sup>146</sup> PRO, C0875/11/1, memorandum by Edmett, 6 August 1941

<sup>147</sup> ibid.



communal problem or we are broken by it.<sup>148</sup>

The ability of the races of the empire to understand each other was therefore dependent on this 'education in facts' and this should be the public relations mission of the Colonial Office.

Sabine reiterated his urgings of the previous year that the Colonial Office should adopt its own public relations propaganda, both at home and in the colonies. Like Edmett he warned of the dangerous impact the MOI's war propaganda could have in the colonies,

primitive peoples do not look upon the power of evil in the same manner as the average Englishman ... in his heart of hearts, an African may regard the power of evil as more likely to secure immediate triumph than the power of good ... the more evil we make Nazism out to be, the less confidence will the African have in our power to defeat it.<sup>149</sup>

In the future, after the conflict with Germany had ended, he feared that 'having been encouraged to hate one branch of the white race they [the Africans] may extend their feeling to others'. He also viewed the racial problem as a key but unpredictable issue of the future, but this did not mean that 'native communities' should forever be kept 'wrapped in cottonwool'. Britain should act now, attempt to mould the way in which future developments within the empire would be perceived in the post-war period and preempt the development of nationalist sentiment which took its strength from the inequalities between the races of the empire.

When the excuse for hating the Germans has been removed, the sentiment may be transferred to what is uppermost in the minds of all Africans as they attain political and social consciousness, namely the colour question. In propaganda it is easy to see the beginning of a train of action, but not always easy to see the end.<sup>150</sup>

As Edmett argued, the Colonial Office should become more proactive, to 'find out' exactly what their propaganda policy was and 'use propaganda instead of inspecting it'.

<sup>148</sup> ibid.

<sup>149</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, minute by Sabine, August 1941.

<sup>150</sup> ibid.

No progress had been made at all in this direction for two years. Again he called for an abandonment of the purely war propaganda:

If you give people porridge for breakfast, porridge for lunch and porridge for dinner, they will get sick of the sight of porridge. To avoid this essential dilemma, propaganda must be related not only to the war, but to the life of the native, in other words with social propaganda and until this fusion takes place it will remain unreal and unconstructive, and likely to promote 'war weariness'.<sup>151</sup>

A resolution to this war propaganda vs. public relations debate between the MOI and the Colonial Office was found when the MOI accepted the widening of propaganda policy about the colonial empire at a joint meeting held in October 1941. In future propaganda would include 'long-term publicity designed to increase knowledge and appreciation in the Colonies themselves of British Colonial policy and its objectives'. In order to strengthen cooperation between the Colonial Office and the Empire Division of the Ministry of Information weekly meetings would be held.<sup>152</sup>

These developments were viewed with satisfaction by some within the Colonial Office as they would end the 'negative variety' of Colonial Office responsibility. The Office would have a more active role in 'initiating the despatch of propaganda material to the Colonies' by 'indicating to the Ministry of Information in what form ... the material should be presented'.<sup>153</sup>

In spite of this recognition by some Colonial Office officials, other than the pure propaganda specialist, of the necessity of expanding activities in the colonies, Edmett argued this alone was not enough. The only way to overcome what he called the 'Teutonic outlook' of the MOI

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<sup>151</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, 'Imperial Propaganda', by Edmett, undated.

<sup>152</sup> PRO, CO875/11/20, minutes of meeting held on 6 October 1941 to discuss publicity work in the Colonies.

<sup>153</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, Minute by Sidebotham, 9 October 1941. Sir Cosmo Parkinson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, wrote 'I am glad to know of these talks and their satisfactory outcome', *ibid.*, 9 October 1941.



would be for the Geographical Departments of the Colonial Office to take a 'particular interest in propaganda machinery in general', and to break down the 'parochial' organisation of Colonial Office departments.<sup>154</sup> Sir Charles Jeffries, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, thought that representation at the joint MOI-Colonial Office meetings should not however, be automatic. Geographical Departments would only attend when their own particular business was discussed.<sup>155</sup>

Having persuaded the MOI to incorporate long-term public relations into their war propaganda output in the colonies the proposals MacDonald had supported before the outbreak of the war for public relations to be a permanent feature of the Colonial Office's own activities, it was decided to expand Colonial Office public relations activities to include 'on political grounds' telling the people of Britain more about the colonies to be done 'irrespective of the war' and was necessary not least because it was the British people who were 'ultimately responsible' for British colonial policy.<sup>156</sup> The existing state of ignorance was therefore undesirable, as it was 'not in the interests of either the Colonies or of the mother country that Colonial affairs should be in the hands of officials who are not subject to the stimulus and check of public criticism'.<sup>157</sup> At home in war and peace, the

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<sup>154</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, minute by Edmett, 14 October 1941. This 'parochial' attitude can be seen in the reaction of George Seel Assistant Secretary in the Colonial Services Department and former Liaison Officer with the MOI to the suggestion that all departments should be represented at meetings on colonial propaganda: 'in British colonies the officials of the Colonial Service are themselves propagandists in the most direct form, for good or ill according to their behaviour, but I do not think the manufacture of 'synthetic' propaganda ... is a matter which directly concerns the Colonial Service department', PRO, CO875/5/6, Seel to Jeffries, 16 December 1941.

<sup>155</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, minute by Edmett, 14 October 1941.

<sup>156</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, memorandum by Sabine on colonial public relations, undated.

<sup>157</sup> PRO, CO875/19/10, 'publicity and the colonial empire', 7 July 1942.

British public should be educated in their responsibilities:

the general aim of the publicity effort should be to present the Colonies realistically not so much as places where various raw materials are produced, strange animals are to be found, fantastic tribes live in romantic dirt and ignorance, but as communities of men, women and children, who are fundamentally not so very different from ourselves, whose human problems are much the same, who share with us the citizenship of the British Empire, and for whose welfare and progress we have undertaken the responsibility... It should also be shown that the relation between this country and the Colonies is mutual. They need our moral and material support; but we also need the friendship of the Colonial peoples all over the world. This friendship has meant a great deal to us in the present war and it will mean more as the Colonial peoples themselves progressively advance to take their place amongst the civilised nations.<sup>158</sup>

This public relations for the colonial empire should, Sabine thought, also support the MOI's main activity of war propaganda. Given they would have to produce the material using MOI production divisions, the Colonial Office emphasised the value of this additional aspect 'to bring it home to the people in this country that the Empire is supporting them and ... to present to this country and in other countries a picture of past achievements and a forward constructive policy as one part of a great antidote of the New Order'.<sup>159</sup>

A circular despatch was sent to all the colonies in November 1941 informing the colonial Governors of the changes from the 'standardised' Ministry of Information 'winning the war' kind of propoganda to propoganda of a more 'specialised' nature, and told them that the 'question of publicity in the Colonies' was 'under general review'. In future propoganda would cover:

- (1) longterm propoganda designed to stimulate understanding and appreciation in the Colonies of British Colonial policy and its objectives
- (2) material showing more specifically appreciation felt in this country of contribution to the war effort made

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<sup>158</sup> ibid.

<sup>159</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, memorandum by Sabine on 'Colonial Office Public Relations', undated.



by Colonies in so many ways.<sup>160</sup>

Edmett was concerned that the potential of public relations as part of the everyday activities of Colonial Service officers should not be overlooked and argued that 'administrative zeal and devotion to duty' were 'not enough'. It would be increasingly necessary to establish machinery which would maintain contact with all sections of colonial communities in order to implement the new development policies. Public relations could help in improving the relationship between the governed and governing as part of a two-way inter-active process. It would no longer be a case of top downwards colonial government gazettes merely informing the populations of news. Edmett was encouraged by the attitude adopted by Sir Henry Moore. Moore became Governor of Kenya in 1940, where he had been Acting Governor in 1930, after three years in the Colonial Office. Moore seems to have undergone a change of heart about public relations since his curt outburst against the MOI's propaganda in September 1939. He addressed a conference of the East African Information Officers in 1941 and said that the role of the Information Officer was 'not only to interpret the vagaries of Government to a bewildered public but also to interpret to a bewildered Government the stirrings of thought in the public mind'.

It is interesting that on the eve of the fall of Singapore, Edmett predicted that the failure to solve the key question of race and the relationship between the governed and the governing could bring catastrophe:

the stark and obvious fact which the British Empire has to face is that four fifths of it is not British, and as long as the majority believe the Empire is run on a set of values which puts the interests of the European minority above those of the alien majority, there will be disunity, unhappiness and demoralisation.

If Britain did not take heed of the poets warning, 'on my heels I hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near', Edmett wrote, the British empire 'may shortly find itself on

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<sup>160</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, circular despatch to all Colonies, 13 November 1941.

evolution's scrap heap, the last name on the list of those empires in history which have been tried and found wanting'. He thought something more should be done in the colonies to take up Moore's lead,

The decisive factor seems to be that if we fall down on public relations at home we shall not lose an Empire, but if we fail in the Colonies, we may.<sup>161</sup>

The Colonial Office's relationship with the MOI was still problematic throughout 1942. Sabine complained of the slow progress of the MOI in carrying through the long-term campaign.<sup>162</sup> It was not that liaison was now the problem but more generally MOI criticism about the lack of 'publicity sense' in the Colonial Office.<sup>163</sup> Publicity sent out from Britain was often a few months out of date. John Sidebotham, Assistant Secretary of State in the General Department of the Colonial Office, voiced his concern:

it is no use our putting pressure on the Ministry unless the machinery of the Public Relations Branch here is adequate to provide the Ministry with all the information they need from us, and I have suggested to Mr. Sabine that he should go fully into this at an early date from the Staff aspect, etc. I feel we ought to be in position to flood the Ministry with material; and then if they do not do their part as our machinery, we can properly put the screw on.<sup>164</sup>

Sir George Gater\*, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, the former Chief Clerk of London County Council, who had no experience either of the colonies nor of the civil service the most important permanent official in the Colonial Office, found fault not in the Colonial Office nor in the relationship between the two Departments, but in the colonies themselves. He thought that the colonial Governments were failing to inform the Colonial Office immediately of events which might have an important publicity aspect in Britain. He recommended that a

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<sup>161</sup> PRO, CO875, 11/1, minute by Edmett, 30 December 1941.

<sup>162</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sabine, 20 July 1942.

<sup>163</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, minute by Gent, 27 April 1942.

<sup>164</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sidebotham, 22 July 1942.



circular despatch should be sent to all colonies suggesting that if they had not already appointed an Information Officer they should do so.<sup>165</sup> In a similar vein the Colonial Office's Press Officer, A.J. Haler, complained about the lack of material from the colonies being sent to the British press. One response from Kenya was that, 'one cannot "make" news (unless of course, the Press Officers are to go out and bite our canine friends)'.<sup>166</sup>

With the United States entrance into the war in December 1941 victory was assured; a note of quiet confidence was apparent. The Colonial Office could now devote more of its efforts to the discussion and consideration of post-war developments, as the empire's future seemed to be secured. Any immediate feelings of relief, however, dissipated with the news of events in the Far East. The fall of Singapore 'was a rude awakening. The disinclination of the colonial wards to come to the assistance of the trustee struck at the heart of Britain's propaganda in defence of its empire'.<sup>167</sup> It seemed as if Edmett's fears were being realised. Elsewhere the British empire faced a threat, not from developments within the colonies, but from their wartime ally the United States.

Following the adoption of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 and the consequent debate over whether Article Three and its promise to 'respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live' applied to the colonies, the Colonial Office faced pressure from the Foreign Office to produce a similar Colonial Charter outlining post-war intentions in the interests of

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<sup>165</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, minute by Sir George Gater, 28 April 1942. A circular despatch to that effect was sent on 8 May 1942. Gater was not popular with many of his junior officials who were sympathetic to his predecessor, Sir Cosmo Parkinson's, unceremonious removal. Gater however proved himself to be more sympathetic to the aims of public relations and seemed to understand the necessity of communicating to the wider world the activities of his department. Indeed 'he prided himself on his sensitivity to parliamentary opinion', Lee and Petter, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>166</sup> PRO, CO875/13/17, Haler to Sabine, 7 September 1942.

<sup>167</sup> Smyth, 'Britain's African Colonies ...', p.68.

Anglo-American relations. The Colonial Office 'began to experience in earnest the tension created between its recognition that some form of public act of assurance was necessary and its determination not to dance to the tune of others'.<sup>168</sup> Against the Colonial Office's inclinations much time was taken up in 1942 discussing the possibility of issuing a joint Anglo-American declaration on the colonies. This produced further tensions because Colonial Office officials out of sympathy with the aims of Sabine's activities suspected that the requirements of a successful propaganda campaign in the United States were becoming the source of policy initiatives. As Sabine himself recognised, 'the dividing line between public relations and policy may be at times dangerously obscure'.<sup>169</sup>

In spite of these misgivings the political and diplomatic realities faced by a Colonial Office on the defensive and the campaigning by the propaganda specialists over the previous two years combined to produce a positive public relations policy. They had also received endorsement from a much respected source, Lord Hailey's African Survey. Hailey wrote:

The proper presentation of government policy ... has now become a matter of increasing importance. It is in particular necessary to educate public opinion through the newspapers and by the extension of radio services, and it is to be hoped that the departments of information which have been built up during the war will not be abandoned in peace-time.<sup>170</sup>

That the empire needed to be more positively projected seemed to be beyond doubt as it had become more urgent than ever to show the empire as a dynamic not dying empire. Vincent Harlow of the Empire Division of the MOI noted the British public was feeling negative towards the colonial

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<sup>168</sup> Lee and Petter, p.123. For detail on the Anglo-American negotiations for a Colonial Charter, Wm. Roger Louis, Imperialism at Bay, (Oxford, 1986); J.E. Williams, 'The Joint Declaration on the Colonies: an issue in Anglo-American relations, 1942-1944,' British Journal of International Studies, vol.II, 1976, pp.267-292.

<sup>169</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.139.

<sup>170</sup> PRO, CO875/11/1, Pedler to Sabine, 7 February 1942.



empire and was even bored by it. Although Britain was the 'leader of a world-wide Commonwealth', she had 'lost during a cynical interval its old vigorous and unquestioning belief in its civilising "mission"'.<sup>171</sup> How had this state of affairs come about? Perhaps the EMB and CEMB's chickens were coming home to roost. As Harlow commented, 'in the popular imagination the Empire has tended to become too much identified with Australian wool, Canadian apples and West African cocoa'. The new objective would not be to 'advertise' the British Empire, but 'to re-interpret it'.<sup>172</sup>

Indifference to the colonial empire, in Harlow's view, was also caused by 'remoteness' from colonial life and because,

the greater part of the original Colonial empire, consisting of British settlements, has now grown up and passed into the category of self-governing nations. Apart from Kenya and the Rhodesias and a few island communities, the modern colonial Empire consists almost entirely of coloured races. The ties of kinship are therefore largely absent.

But the task of educating British public opinion was not as difficult as it would first appear, this would be done from an entirely fresh angle:

There will be nothing in the nature of a 'stunt' about this, nor will there be anything artificial in the freshness of the presentation. On the contrary, the task will be to reveal the Empire or Commonwealth for what it really is - a laboratory in which experiments in inter-national and inter-racial association of unique value and importance are being conducted.<sup>173</sup>

The very nature of Britain's relationship with her colonial empire was undergoing a radical transformation: 'trusteeship is being raised from the "care and maintenance" basis to a cooperative guardianship'. As this change would be primarily concerned with raising the colonial peoples' standard of living a comparison was obvious. Developments in the empire could be presented 'as

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<sup>171</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, Harlow to Gater containing his draft memorandum, 'publicity about the British empire', 3 September 1942.

<sup>172</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, Harlow to Gater, 3 September 1942.

<sup>173</sup> ibid.

an essential complement to parallel ideas at home'. Moreover, 'all our hopes for a stable, progressive and egalitarian society at home are ultimately dependent on the establishment and maintenance of security and collaboration on a healthy basis in the world at large'. Planning for the colonial empire provided a close parallel with 'similar though more advanced social and industrial planning at home'.<sup>174</sup>

Sabine agreed in general with Harlow's assessment of the task before them in educating British public opinion 'the point must be strongly made that the public are responsible - it is their colonial policy'. Harlow saw the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir George Gater, about his recommendations and received Colonial Office support for any representations he would be making to Sir Cyril Radcliffe\*, the Director-General of the Ministry of Information, as well as to the Treasury for more staff in order to tackle the new objectives.<sup>175</sup>

In October 1942 Sabine presented a memorandum for consideration by his senior colleagues, a stocktake on the activities of the Public Relations Department to date. He argued for an increase in staff and noted that it was 'very much smaller than of any other great Department of State'.<sup>176</sup> Publicity policy would also have to be altered as Colonial Office activity on this in the past had been 'to do not so much propaganda as information work...[and]... I think some rather more vigorous corrective is needed'. While interest had increased in the colonies there was a lack of 'any sense of pride in our

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<sup>174</sup> ibid.

<sup>175</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sabine, 7 September 1942; record of a meeting between Harlow and Gater, 9 September 1942; Gater subsequently talked to Radcliffe who agreed to give Harlow an assistant and for the time being the Colonial Office would have to be content given pressures the Ministry of Information faced from the Treasury, minute by Gater, 15 September 1942.

<sup>176</sup> In October 1942 the staff of the Public Relations Department consisted of a Public Relations Officer (Sabine), two administrative officers, an administrative assistant, two Press Officers and two clerical assistants.



achievements in the Colonial sphere. There is still too much emphasis on the shortcomings and unresolved problems'. It was necessary to move away from the national characteristic of reluctance to stress British achievements. This could be done through propaganda which would compare the colonies when Britain took them over with what they were in 1942. The theme was largely based on the past, and while Sabine recognised that 'history is not news' he thought it was necessary because attitudes today were based on an 'imperfect appreciation of the past'. This theme could be successful if it were accompanied by 'a steady stream of material on what we are doing now'.<sup>177</sup>

The Public Relations Department seemed to have found a Messiah in the form of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State himself. Sir George Gater was impressed with Sabine's 'very interesting Report'; he thought Sabine's conclusion about the direction publicity should take was 'right' and Sabine was to be 'congratulated on the range of performance by his small staff'. Gater also wanted to look towards increased efforts in the colonies themselves and even suggested that Sabine should visit the African Dependencies to 'make personal touch' with the Information Officers. The main priority was to formulate a coordinated scheme of colonial publicity.<sup>178</sup> Lord Cranborne\*, the Secretary of State, found Sabine's memorandum 'most helpful' and while he thought Gater's idea for Sabine to make a tour of Africa was a good one, he preferred that this should be postponed until some of Sabine's recommendations had been carried out.<sup>179</sup>

At last it appeared that the Public Relations Department had received endorsement from the highest levels

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<sup>177</sup> PRO, C0875/14/10, memorandum by Sabine, 1 October 1942 and subsequent minute, 10 October 1942.

<sup>178</sup> PRO, C0875/14/10, minute by Gater, 8 October 1942. The staff of the Public Relations Department stood at one Public Relations Officer, two administrative officers, one administrative assistant, one journalist, one press officer and two clerical assistants.

<sup>179</sup> PRO, C0875/14/10, minute by Cranborne, 13 October 1942.

in the Colonial Office and agreement had been found in principle about the expansion of the terms of reference of colonial publicity. It also seemed that by the end of the year a 'theme' had been found. Gervas Huxley, husband of the writer Elspeth Huxley\*, veteran of the EMB and the International Tea Expansion Board, joined the Ministry of Information as the Director of the Empire Division.<sup>180</sup> Lord Hailey, Huxley argued, had found the theme - the abandonment of 'trusteeship' and its replacement with 'partnership'.

The idea of partnership is one that should harmonise with the general aspirations of our people for the post-war world aspirations firstly of partnership with the other members of the United Nations and secondly between all the peoples of the world. It should, therefore, be possible successfully to present the theme that the people of Britain have a very special opportunity of senior partnership with the backward peoples of the Colonies, for whose welfare we have, in the past, assumed responsibility. It should, further, be possible to inculcate a pride in maintaining this responsibility in the future, as a facet of our new restored belief in ourselves, presenting this partnership as an opportunity and challenge.<sup>181</sup>

Not only did this provide a means of increasing interest in the colonies in the United Kingdom, it would provide a way of answering critics abroad, especially in the United States. Moreover, it would also provide a necessary articulation of Britain's new imperial 'mission', particularly important in public relations in the colonies, for the future of Britain's empire in Africa a living and growing organism. As Huxley himself wrote, the partnership theme,

can be presented as opening up a very real world of opportunity for young men in the post-war world. Hitherto there has been a tendency on the part of the public to regard the Colonies as a field for exploitation by the 'Old School Tie.' It must be shown that there is an opportunity for partnership service

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<sup>180</sup> As Sabine wrote of the new champion of the forward publicity policy 'I think we are very fortunate in having Mr. Huxley associated with us'. PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sabine, 24 December 1942. C.f. Smyth, 'Britain's African Colonies ...', pp. 69-70.

<sup>181</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, memorandum by Huxley, 'Colonial Publicity in the United Kingdom', undated.



by all classes in the vast province of Colonial development - in scientific work, in agriculture, in marketing, in transport, in health services, in education - in all of which fields the Colonial peoples must rely, to a greater or less degree and for sometime to come, on outside help, and in all of which, while not excluding men of other Nations, we, by tradition and experience, are qualified to take the major share.<sup>182</sup>

The theme of the 'new empire' of 'partnership' aptly captured the mood and optimism of 1943, giving public expression to the work of the Colonial Office which had begun to throw itself wholeheartedly into the process of reconstruction and post-war planning.

Huxley soon put into practice the agreed 'partnership' theme and in a further memorandum on activities undertaken by the Ministry of Information in the United Kingdom he felt it was again necessary to reiterate the theme's importance and value. The British public would not be enlightened by an 'advertising' campaign, but by a 'sustained and long-term effort in education'. By stressing the long-term nature of the campaign, the implication was obvious: the campaign would not be over once peace came.<sup>183</sup>

Sabine was delighted with the progress in the MOI under Huxley's guidance; he had 'transformed the Ministry almost out of all recognition' not least because the Ministry had someone with 'first hand knowledge of the Colonies' where before colonial propaganda had been 'unreal' and in an 'academic form'. Sabine viewed this as only the beginning for there was 'no indication that we are handling propaganda weapons with the force and urgency which will some time be necessary'.<sup>184</sup>

Sir Thomas Lloyd\*, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, supervising the Public Relations Department, rising star of the development generation of Colonial Office officials, who was promoted to Permanent Under-Secretary of State in 1947 on Gater's retirement over more senior men, hoped that

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<sup>182</sup> ibid.

<sup>183</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, memorandum by Huxley, 18 May 1943.

<sup>184</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, memorandum by Sabine, 19 May 1943.

the Colonial Office would be able to 'make the most' of the publicity opportunities Huxley was giving them. Sir George Gater also appreciated the change at the MOI. Up until recently, he wrote, the Colonial Office had to 'goad' the Ministry on. Now a new problem had arisen. The MOI was 'setting such a rapid pace that our Public Relations Department is finding difficulty in keeping in step'. Therefore as a 'matter of urgency' he thought that the Colonial Office should turn its attention towards 'strengthening the Public Relations Department'.<sup>185</sup>

For the time being the decision on an increase in the staff of the Public Relations Department was deferred. Meanwhile, the Public Relations Department officials focused their attention on the question of post-war requirements, given that the educative process would be a long-term one. In the first place it was assumed that there would be 'a permanent need in the Colonies for officers with experience of and aptitude for public relations work'.<sup>186</sup> Second, public relations would have a significant post-war political role when the Information qua Public Relations Officers in the colonies would be increasingly important as 'peace and social and economic developments would require expert interpretation'.<sup>187</sup> Although in many colonies the first time an Information Officer had been employed had been for the necessity of giving out information during the war, his role would be expanded to allow them to 'play a more useful and responsible part in the [Colonial] administration'. Conceived in these terms the Information Officer would be part of a more interactive relationship between the governed and the governing, (providing closer liaison between the government and the people); the press were no longer 'regarded' as sufficiently representative to provide

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<sup>185</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, minute by Lloyd, 20 May 1943; minute by Gater, 21 May 1943. Sabine prepared a note for the Secretary of State's consideration on the publicity activities in Britain in August.

<sup>186</sup> PRO, CO875/5/15, minute by Morgan, 11 June 1943.

<sup>187</sup> PRO, CO875/5/15, minute by Usill, undated.



an accurate gauge of public opinion'. The Information Officer,

would not only collect and distribute information but would act as a liaison between the administration and the public. On the one hand, he would keep the Government informed about the state of public opinion and its reactions to current events and measures proposed or taken by the administration, and he would advise as to the most appropriate action to enlighten and correct that public opinion. On the other hand, as an official listening post and mouthpiece he would need the confidence and the cooperation of the Government and would be regarded as a responsible channel for the dissemination of facts and views that the Government wished to put before the public.<sup>188</sup>

And as Sabine argued, public relations could ultimately help to hold the imperial line:

The continuation of these services after the war is over is a matter of the highest importance... I believe that a good Public Relations service in the Colonies may do much if handled in the right way to bridge the awkward gap which we may expect between the rise of political consciousness and the time, which may be far distant, when some of the political aspirations aroused can be satisfied.<sup>189</sup>

This in turn would have implications for Colonial Service recruitment. Sir Ralph Furse\*, the Director of Colonial Service Recruitment, lent force to the more general view that all Colonial Service officers should be to some extent public relations men. Furse thought that it would be a 'brave man who would sit down now to draw the map of the British Empire as it may appear in 1950', but one thing he thought important whatever the outcome was to 'prevent too wide a divergence between the trend of colonial policy and that of public opinion at home, if not also in the Dominions and in certain foreign countries'. Furse used the metaphor of the theatre to explore the theme:

What is the audience? Hitherto the gallery - the outer, colonial, ring of the theatre - has been vocal, often critical, sometimes abusive. The trouble with the stalls has been that they were empty or apathetic. Distinguished foreigners seldom criticised from the boxes. All this is changing. The change was coming anyhow. Singapore has precipitated it. The gallery can

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<sup>188</sup> PRO, CO875/5/15, minute by Morgan, 11 June 1943.

<sup>189</sup> PRO, CO875/5/15, minute by Sabine, 24 June 1943.

be relied on for the catcalls and oranges(it will be peacetime). But in the future the actors from the Colonial Service (and the Colonial Office) will have to play more difficult parts under a cross fire of criticism from all corners of the theatre; from home, the Dominions and foreign countries, as well as the Colonies. And until the actors, and the best dramatic critics, have convinced the public that the play is a good play, and not merely an excuse for putting money in the pockets of the promoters, and sincere, much of the criticism will be misguided or ill-informed: defeatist if not actively hostile.<sup>190</sup>

The Colonial Office discussed whether training in public relations should be incorporated into courses run at Oxford for Colonial Service candidates. David MacDougall\*, appointed temporary Principal from Hong Kong serving in the Public Relations Department in 1942, transferred to the MOI before joining the British Embassy staff in Washington as a special advisor on Colonial Affairs, put forward the case for public relations training to Furse. It was not the aim to 'convert colonial cadet officers into amateurish newspapermen, publicity hounds or half-baked advertising agents', but rather to implant 'in the minds of officials at the start of their careers some notion of the power of the modern publicity machine ... [an] inescapable element of life in the twentieth century'. Moreover, MacDougall noted that in a period of diminishing resources the British empire could no longer be governed by the censure of military presence:

As a colonial service we govern by consent. Consent is in one sense another name for public relations. If as a service we can mobilise public opinion, either within or without colonial areas, behind governmental policies on a basis of sympathetic understanding, then obviously we gain greatly ... by instinct we dislike it, but we cannot afford not to understand it, and we

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<sup>190</sup> PRO, CO967/22, 'An Inquiry into the System of Training the Colonial Service - with Suggestions for its Reform to Meet Post-war Conditions', a memorandum by Sir Ralph Furse, 26 November 1943. Furse, it should be stressed, was idiosyncratic in maintaining a belief that Colonial Officers should be good all-rounders in spite of the increasing tendency towards specialisation in the Colonial Service, c.f. his autobiography, Aucuparius: Recollections of a Recruiting Officer (London, 1962).



cannot afford to underestimate it.<sup>191</sup>

The case for Public Relations Department expansion had become somewhat sidetracked by Sir Charles Jeffries's suggestion for the establishment of a 'Colonial Council-British Council-like' body to promote better knowledge of the colonies.<sup>192</sup> Sabine in a comprehensive and defensive memorandum on public relations, sensing the attack from those who thought the activities of the Public Relations Department were justifiable in time of war only, appealed for support in the face of the hostility the Department had faced ever since its inception in 1940. In an incredible outburst which even to modern ears seems extreme, let alone to those who were fighting to rid the world of fascism, Sabine attacked the two types of attitudes to public relations that he had found in the Colonial Office. The first, in his opinion, 'naive and unrealistic' view, which he hesitated to call 'crypto-fascist' held:

a genuine belief that public interest and public opinion cannot and should not be allowed to affect the shaping and development of our policy, which is the province of the expert.

The second, 'potentially harmful' view of public relations, saw it

as a means of supplying soothing syrup to the public and of imposing a point of view upon them, with a cynical disregard of all the principles of democracy.

He rehearsed all the previous arguments: the important role public relations would play in the post-war world; the great progress made and the success of the various

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<sup>191</sup> PRO, C0875/19/9, MacDougall to Furse, 13 August 1943. Sir Charles Jeffries felt there was merit in this suggestion and remarked wryly, 'though Mr. MacDougall does not suggest that advertising should become a weapon of government, I am afraid it is already so!'

<sup>192</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, memorandum by Jeffries, 15 April 1943. The details do not concern us here but Jeffries argued for its immediate establishment as an 'independent' body which would have the advantage of appearing more objective and that for internal political reasons 'it is undesirable... that the Public Relations Department should be larger than any other single department of the Office.' Sabine, on the other hand, thought that it was necessary to maintain 'independence and unity of control of our propaganda policy and its execution by the Colonial Office', *ibid.*, 4 October 1944.

campaigns to date; the battle for control between the Colonial Office and the MOI; the improvement of relations between the MOI and the Colonial Office and the acceptance of the theme of 'partnership' as the basis for the projection of the 'new empire'. It was important, he argued, that their work should be continued and expanded in the post-war period because the 'simple fact' had to be faced that 'the future of Great Britain depends on its future as an Empire and Commonwealth and not as a small island in the North Sea with a population of 46,000,000 people'.<sup>193</sup>

Thomas Lloyd, Assistant Under-Secretary of State was impressed with Sabine's argument. He noted that the Ministerial Committee on the Machinery of Government had agreed that 'considerable Government publicity would be required after the war'; that 'Public Relations staffs of appropriate size would still be necessary in many Departments after the Ministry of Information has disappeared' and that it was likely that some sort of common service organisation would be retained following the disbanding of the Ministry of Information after the war with Japan had come to an end. Previously Thomas Lloyd had favoured Jeffries' idea for the establishment of a 'Colonial Council', but was swayed by the conclusions of the Ministerial Committee to support Sabine's recommendations for an expansion of the staff of the Public Relations Department.<sup>194</sup>

Sabine's recommendations for expansion met a serious obstacle, however, in the person of Sir Sydney Caine\*, Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of the Economics Division, later Third Secretary to the Treasury and Director of the London School of Economics. Caine had a 'lack of sympathy' with Sabine's 'basic objectives'. Nor did he even support Jeffries' ideas for a Colonial Council. He questioned the advisability of extending to peacetime the functions of a Department which had grown up

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<sup>193</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, memorandum by Sabine, 4 October 1944.

<sup>194</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, Lloyd to Gater, 16 October 1944.



in the particular circumstance of wartime.<sup>195</sup> Caine was concerned about the political effects of a Public Relations Department creating 'embarrassing expectations which will not be possible to live up to'. Instead of an active public relations policy Caine preferred the old passive methods of responding to enquiries and distributing information on request. For until the time, he argued, when Britain's colonies 'look better in the shop window, we had better not put them there'.<sup>196</sup>

The matter went before a meeting of the Under-Secretaries of State and in the meantime the Public Relations Department survived Caine's onslaught. The meeting decided that they could agree to 'some additions' in the Department's staff.<sup>197</sup> Having won a small victory in the Colonial Office that for the time at least the future existence of the Public Relations Department would not be under an immediate threat. Attention then turned towards public relations organisation in the colonies themselves. In early 1945 the Colonial Office considered Sabine's recommendations following a tour he made of the African colonies between November 1943 and March 1944. He thought that Africans were in need of 'guidance and leadership' and had to be encouraged to 'strengthen their connexion with us ... to give them a more conscious sense of their association with the Empire and Commonwealth'. He defined the future functions of colonial public relations as:

A. To interpret the policy of the government to the people, and the views of the people to the government in the closest co-operation with the Administration and the technical departments. B. To provide information about Colonial affairs in Great Britain and elsewhere. C. To provide the Colonial public with information about developments and events in Great Britain; to interpret HMG's Colonial policy to the Colonial public. D. To act as an advisory and co-ordinating agency for the planning and execution of Departmental propaganda campaigns.

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<sup>195</sup> PRO CO875/20/8, note by Caine, 31 October 1944.

<sup>196</sup> ibid.

<sup>197</sup> PRO, CO875/20/8, minute by Lloyd, 11 November 1944.

He then went on to outline the 'profile' of an ideal Public Relations Officer in the Colonies. He should be a Senior Administrative officer of about 15-20 years service. His post should become a Secretariat post, and not part of a separate Public Relations Department, so that he can keep in close contact with 'current policy' and be available for consultation at any time.<sup>198</sup> Here perhaps there is an element of unrealistic aspirations given the fierce competition locally for the services of such scarce and desirable officers.

A joint meeting between the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Information was held in January 1945. It was decided that Sabine's recommendations should provide the basis of a circular despatch to the colonial Governors. Debate arose over whether outside 'publicity experts' had a role to play; over who should pay for public relations activities in the Colonies and if application for financial aid could be made under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Sabine explained that it had not been his intention to imply that the Public Relations Officer would not have a staff working under him. The idea that he should be part of the Secretariat had been proposed so that he could deal 'on equal terms' with the other Heads of Colonial Departments. The Public Relations Officer would, as Thomas Lloyd explained, be able to follow the kind of practice in Colonial Labour Offices whereby the Labour Officer employed an expert 'to spread his expert knowledge among the Administration.'<sup>199</sup>

The Colonial Office then considered the despatch for the colonial Governors based on Sabine's report. It was thought that the 'sting', as was so often the case, was the question of finance. Colonial Development and Welfare funds would not normally be available to finance such activities therefore the Governors should be encouraged to do what they could and 'cut their coat according to their

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<sup>198</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, report of Sabine's African tour.

<sup>199</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minutes of a meeting between the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Information on publicity in Africa, undated.



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The resulting despatch to the African Governors embodied all of Sabine's recommendations. It exhorted the Governors to continue and extend their publicity services after the war and stressed,

the urgent need ... of securing the widest possible understanding of Government policy and the measures which will be necessary to deal with the permanent problems of administration and the new problems of rehabilitation and development. As a result, direct or indirect, of the war, there will be a greater receptiveness to new ideas and a greater susceptibility to outside influences on the part of the large African populations. Colonial Governments will be planning and carrying out schemes of development on a more ambitious scale than ever before. The success of these schemes will depend on the ready response and co-operation of the people, which is most likely to be secured if knowledge is widely spread among those it is intended to benefit.<sup>201</sup>

Oliver Stanley\*, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, gave this policy his full endorsement.<sup>202</sup>

In public relations within the colonies a long-term post-war commitment had been made. Sabine, however, wanted the Colonial Office to make a similar long-term commitment to public relations within the Colonial Office itself, following on from the discussions of the previous November. He was still aware of the 'mistrust of and the distaste' for public relations in the Office. He thought public relations should not merely be tolerated as 'a disagreeable but unavoidable necessity' because this attitude would not create the conditions under which it could 'prosper'. He argued that they could 'no longer afford the luxury of doing good work, and letting the facts speak for themselves'. On the contrary, 'facts do not speak for themselves'. In the past Britain had 'neglected over a long period to put our case sufficiently strongly and it

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<sup>200</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minutes by Lloyd, 5 March 1945 and Cohen, 26 February 1945.

<sup>201</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, circular despatch, 28 April 1945.

<sup>202</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minute by Stanley 21 March 1945.

has gone by default'.<sup>203</sup>

Before this issue was resolved the war had been won and a new Labour Government had been elected. In these new circumstances Sabine's ideas met new obstacles. On the one hand, Thomas Lloyd thought that such a commitment could be made as long as Colonial Office needs could 'be secured (and Mr. Sabine is confident they can) by a comparatively small Public Relations Department, making full use of the common service organisation [the projected Central Office of Information]', this would be the 'best arrangement'. Even if the machinery of the Ministry of Information, established to help in the task of publicity to British audiences still existed in the new organisation, Lloyd thought Sabine would still need a Deputy.<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, opposition within the Colonial Office persisted. Caine remained of the same opinion that 'a permanent policy of actively pressing selected information about the Colonies is undesirable'. Edward Gent\*, Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of the Eastern Department, countered by arguing that 'nobody is advocating a continuance of war time practice' but he too thought something on the lines of a quarterly review of available material would suffice. Jeffries thought it 'most desirable' for the British public to take 'an intelligent interest in the Colonies', but he came back to his idea of promoting this through a Colonial Council acting as 'an effective unofficial organisation'.<sup>205</sup>

Sabine reiterated his arguments on the assumption that the new Secretary of State would 'wish a progressive and energetic public relations policy to be pursued by the Colonial Office' and the matter was put to a meeting of the Assistant Under-Secretaries of State. It was acknowledged that until the intention of the new Government was made

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<sup>203</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minute by Sabine, 30 June 1945.

<sup>204</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minutes by Lloyd, 14 July 1945 and 3 September 1945.

<sup>205</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minute by Caine, 15 August 1945; minute by Gent, 16 August 1945; minute by Jeffries, 25 August 1945.



clear no final decisions would be made; and that while 'there was some difference of opinion on the need for a vigorous and active publicity policy' there was 'substantial agreement that if an active policy was to be pursued, the proposals made by Mr. Sabine... were generally acceptable'.<sup>206</sup>

At last Sabine had overcome the major hurdle in getting his ideas for an active, progressive and long-term colonial publicity policy accepted in principle by his most vocal opponents, his own colleagues within the Colonial Office. The implementation of his ideas would have to await the decisions of the new Labour Government.

The campaign designed to enlighten British public opinion about the empire would also continue post-war. The report of the Official Committee of Government Information Services decided that the Empire Information Service of the Ministry of Information would continue as a service department within the new Central Office of Information when it was inaugurated in April 1946. The responsibility for policy would be the joint responsibility of the Colonial, Dominions, India and Burma Offices.<sup>207</sup>

No substantial changes were made in colonial public relations until the appointment of Kenneth Blackburne\* in May 1947 as Director of Information Services and the personal interest shown by the second Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Labour government, Arthur Creech Jones\*.<sup>208</sup> Blackburne was more senior than Sabine and had a respected record in the Colonial Service in Nigeria and

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<sup>206</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, note by Sabine, undated; note of meeting, undated.

<sup>207</sup> PRO, C0875/21/1, note by the Central Office of Information, 1 August 1946.

<sup>208</sup> PRO, C0875/22/5, Circular despatch to all Colonial Governments, 12 May 1947. Noel Sabine left the Colonial Office and the Colonial Service altogether but continued his commitment to the public relations task of communicating to colonial audiences, albeit in the commercial field, as Managing Director of Broadcast Relay Service (Overseas) Ltd. which operated in the West Indies and East Africa, c.f. PRO, C0875/64/3, Colonial Office to Kenya, 31 December 1949 and C0875/67/6, Leechman to Blackburne, 11 January 1950.

Palestine. He had also served as Colonial Secretary in the Gambia and as Administrative Secretary to the Comptroller of Development and Welfare in the West Indies, territories not without a high public profile and surrounded by controversy. Creech Jones, despite his role as guardian of the interests of colonial peoples and check on the colonial policy of the government as the Chairman of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, had first hand experience of the dangers of ignorance about the British empire when he found himself defending Britain's colonial record during a wartime visit to Canada and the United States.<sup>209</sup>

Blackburne's appointment coincided with the period in which the government decided to intensify the development initiative, as much to ease British economic problems as to fulfil promises of the 'new empire' of partnership for the benefit of all and when the Colonial Office was preparing the statement of policy on Local Government. Clearly controversial, these initiatives would require careful handling when made public. One month after his appointment, Blackburne submitted a long memorandum to Sir Charles Jeffries, now the Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary of State, in which he made suggestions to help equip the Colonial Office to meet the public relations challenges. Although Blackburne admitted he had no previous experience of public relations work, he had received advice from Gervas Huxley who had been recently appointed as Honorary Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Information Services. He thought guidance was urgently needed because of the feeling in the department 'that we do not know where we are going'. His note aimed at 'providing not only suggestions to higher authority but also an answer to the feeling of doubt in the Department'. Accordingly, the Information Department was strengthened and reorganised with creative and long-term planning sections.<sup>210</sup>

In order to fulfil Colonial Office Information Department objectives on what they were looking for in a

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<sup>209</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.137.

<sup>210</sup> PRO, CO875/42/6, memorandum by Blackburne, 11 June 1947. C.f. Chapter Seven.



Public Relations Officer in the colonies, Blackburne wished to see the development of 'an esprit de corps' among officers serving in existing departments and to encourage the exchange of staff between the colonies.<sup>211</sup> In February the following year Blackburne noted the difficulty the Colonial Office was experiencing in filling Public Relations posts in the colonies. Although risky it was thought necessary 'to look to the outside market'. William Morgan\*, Blackburne's deputy, thought that every effort should be made to correct any impression that public relations was 'a suitable resting place for "dead-end" administrative officers'. Indeed this type of work should attract the 'brighter types' since it would add 'a useful qualification for high promotion in the political field'. As a result a further circular despatch was sent to the Colonies outlining Colonial Office attitudes to the staffing of Colonial Public Relations Departments.<sup>212</sup>

The next major change occurred in October 1948 following the adoption of an offensive anti-Communist propaganda campaign earlier that year. Therefore in addition to the projection of Britain to the colonies, the projection of the colonies to Britain and the projection of the colonies to the world, a fourth Cold War objective was added to the Colonial Office's Information Department's terms of reference.<sup>213</sup>

The Blackburne proposals were now in place, and little changed in organisation and terms of reference of the Information Department throughout the 1950s. Sir Charles Jeffries wrote in 1950 that Blackburne was to be congratulated on his 'record of very considerable achievement'.<sup>214</sup> As has been seen this had been an upward

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<sup>211</sup> PRO, CO875/22/5, Blackburne to Jeffries, 11 October 1947.

<sup>212</sup> PRO, CO875/22/5, minute by Blackburne, 28 February 1948; minute by Morgan, 28 February 1948; circular despatch to all colonies, 28 April 1948.

<sup>213</sup> C.f. Chapter 7; PRO, CO875/42/7, memorandum by Blackburne, 16 October 1948.

<sup>214</sup> PRO, CO875/73/1, minute by Jeffries, 23 February 1950.

struggle. The crucial period in which many of the subsequent developments had been first mooted had been during the war when the inter-war passivity was gradually surmounted. Instrumental in this story was the realism of Malcolm MacDonald, the persistence of Noel Sabine and the confidence inspired by Gervas Huxley. A catalyst proved to be the threat posed by the MOI to the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The control of colonial propaganda had been wrested away from the MOI and a policy had been adopted which was not merely concerned with the short-term requirement of winning the war and surviving the attacks of American opinion. The propaganda specialists in the Public Relations Department eventually eroded the opposition they faced within the Colonial Office and gained acceptance of a permanent role for public relations in the activities of the Colonial Office and Colonial Service. The criticism that the Colonial Office experience of war-time propaganda had left it unable to 'win the peace' therefore has to be modified.<sup>215</sup> It was not that Colonial Office publicists had been unwilling to try to 'win the peace'. Indeed they were well aware of the possible consequences should a forward policy not be pursued post-war. Arguably one of the greatest propaganda tasks they had faced had been to persuade their own colleagues of the value and necessity of public relations work.

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<sup>215</sup> Smyth, 'Britain's African Colonies ...', passim.



## CHAPTER TWO

## WAR PROPAGANDA ABOUT EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA, 1939-41

The Second World War had a dramatic impact on the course of British history in the second half of the twentieth century in all areas of historical study, social and domestic, foreign and defence, and economic. Moreover, the Second World War represented a watershed in Britain's relationship with her colonies, producing 'far reaching changes in relations between the governors and the governed'.<sup>1</sup> As Michael Crowder has written in the Cambridge History of Africa, historical debate has concentrated more on the nature of this watershed, whether, on the one hand, it unleashed new forces or merely stimulated forces already in play, rather than on what actually occurred in Africa and in Africa's relationship with Britain. What can be asserted with confidence, he suggests, is that the African colonies were more affected by the Second World War than they had been by the First World War.<sup>2</sup> It has also been argued in chapter one that the war began the process of fundamental change in the outlook of the Colonial Office to public relations and that 'accountability became as crucial an issue for the [Colonial] Office as efficiency'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the hardships of the great depression the British imperial system went to war intact. In 1939 British imperialists had every reason to be optimistic. The collapse of the imperial system in South-East Asia did not occur until 1942 and the political turbulence in the Indian subcontinent was not mirrored in Africa. Although 'Africa did not experience the dislocation of war as dramatically as did Asia' nevertheless, 'planning for its political future was no less complicated for that'.<sup>4</sup> By 1939 'the

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Porter and A.J. Stockwell, British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation, 1938-64: Volume 1, 1938-51, (London, 1987), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Crowder, op.cit., p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.115.

<sup>4</sup> Porter and Stockwell, op.cit., p.35.

European powers were as firmly in control of their African territories as they ever would be'.<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1939 African criticism of British imperialism was largely limited to the nature of imperialism rather than to its existence. Early prospects for African independence were not on the political agenda in 1939. Up to this point the Labour Party only had Indian independence on its programme, even self-government for African colonies was seen as a remote prospect.<sup>6</sup> Even the demands of the emerging nationalists were modest in comparison with Asia; in 1943 the more politically advanced in comparison with East and Central African political leaders, West African Students Union called for 'internal autonomy for each of the four West African colonies'.<sup>7</sup>

Although little military action took place in the African continent south of the Sahara during the Second World War, the temptation to view the war as external to Africa should be avoided. While it has been argued that 'Africans experienced the Second World War vicariously through war news and propaganda' this misses the point as 'there was scarcely a level of life, both material and less tangible, that was not fundamentally affected from the Cape to Cairo'.<sup>8</sup> Total war demanded total effort. Moreover a cooperative effort was demanded not only of Britain and her allies but also of Britain in partnership with her empire, be they members of the fighting forces or civilians engaged

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<sup>5</sup> Crowder, op.cit., p.8.

<sup>6</sup> Crowder, ibid., p.4. Crowder also quotes the statement made by the Labour Colonial Secretary in the National Government, Malcolm MacDonald in 1938 on political development in African colonies, 'It may take generations, or even centuries, for the peoples in some parts of the colonial empire to achieve self-government. But it is a major part of our policy even among backward peoples of Africa, to teach them always to be able to stand a little more on their own two feet'.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Henri Grimal, Decolonization: the British, French, Dutch and Belgian Empires, 1919-1963 (London, 1978), p.120.

<sup>8</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, 'War Propaganda ... in Northern Rhodesia', p.345; David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, Africa and the Second World War, (London, 1986), p.2.



in war work, factory workers in London or Nairobi. As the war progressed the colonies in Africa were to become increasingly vital to the British war effort, particularly in supplying the Middle Eastern theatre. They provided essential raw materials and food stuffs, were a source of manpower and made direct monetary contributions. For example, by the end of 1943 Northern Rhodesia was contributing a staggering 3.4 million pounds to the war effort, compared with its estimated annual revenue of 2.6 million pounds in 1942.<sup>9</sup> By mid-1941 91,000 Africans had been mobilized to fight in the East African campaign and by 1945 86,740 African Tanganyikans had been conscripted.<sup>10</sup> Products from East and Central Africa included Tanganyikan sisal, gold, pyrethrum, tobacco, millet, cotton and beef; Kenyan sisal, gold, maize, coffee, cotton, tea, beef; Ugandan cotton, millet, coffee and beef; Nyasaland tea and coffee; Southern Rhodesian gold, asbestos, copper and chrome ore and Northern Rhodesian zinc, copper, cobalt, millet, maize and vanadium.<sup>11</sup> During the war the African colonies dramatically increased the extraction of raw materials and also began to process them, not merely export them. The war also witnessed the development of the infrastructure in Africa with the expansion of the ports of Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam and the growth of towns like Nairobi.

But these benefits to Britain's war effort also brought new factors and hardships into play. Cooperation was at times grudging. Britain became vulnerable to accusations of exploiting her African colonies which had to accept new conditions imposed by exchange controls, rising inflation, restrictions on trade with non-sterling countries, import and export quotas, price control and rationing, of labour conscription. The novelty of direct metropolitan intervention into the economies of the African colonies and large scale planning had inevitable

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<sup>9</sup> Porter and Stockwell, op.cit., p.22.

<sup>10</sup> Killingray and Rathbone, op.cit., p.147.

<sup>11</sup> PRO, INF1/245/file.

consequences for the post-war relationship between Britain and her colonies. The direction of colonial economies created new habits and responsibilities undertaken by the metropolitan government which were not altogether relinquished in the postwar period. It was hoped that the 'modernisation' of the African economies which brought rapid increases in the standard of living for Africans could be 'sold' as advancement. It was also clear that 'development was a major item on the political agenda'.<sup>12</sup> Britain responded with a new commitment under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940 of 5 million pounds for development projects, a 'testimony to the values for which Britain was fighting and a sign of her confidence in victory'.<sup>13</sup> It was hoped that this commitment would have the additional advantage of 'buying off' all 'but the most extreme activists and at the same time would remove the underlying social conditions that gave nationalism "street credibility"'.<sup>14</sup>

With hindsight it is possible to argue that British optimism as to the future of their position in Africa was unrealistic. The war created new problems which were not tackled in a comprehensive way in the course of the war. The question of the constitutional development of the African colonies was largely suspended, as all efforts were subordinated to the task of winning the war. The situation faced by Britain in East and Central Africa was further complicated by the existence of vocal white settler communities who, because of manpower shortages in the colonial service, had achieved new positions of responsibility. This, in addition to their important role in war production, would mean that they were even more unlikely to accept a return to their pre-war position. In turn, this led the British government to make promises, albeit vague, to consider increased settler participation in government. However the picture provided by official

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<sup>12</sup> Killingray and Rathbone, op.cit., p.7

<sup>13</sup> Porter and Stockwell, op.cit., p.20.

<sup>14</sup> Killingray and Rathbone, op.cit., p.7



British propaganda about the British empire in East and Central Africa during the Second World War was notable for the absence of these controversial questions. A positive image of empire and its prospects for the future was projected and although there was an inclination within the Colonial Office to own up to past mistakes in the context of promising a better future one is hard pressed to find mention in government propaganda of the controversial issues of the day: segregation and the colour bar, forced labour, riots in the Copperbelt in 1940, labour unrest in Kenya in 1943, riots in Uganda in 1945, settler agitation for amalgamation in Central Africa and Closer Union in East Africa, the future of European settlement or produce price fixing.

All had become vulnerable because of improved technical developments in mass communications and in African education. This had two major effects, first, 'a much larger segment of the African population was aware of the issues involved' and second, by bringing the Africans irrevocably into the mainstream of international politics, 'the forces stirred in Africa by the Second World War were aimed at securing control of the houses the Europeans had built'.<sup>15</sup> The way in which this effort was mobilised by British propaganda in East and Central Africa and the manner in which East and Central Africa were projected in the course of the Second World War to various audiences, to the Africans, Indians and Europeans living in these territories; to the British public; and to American and 'world' opinion will be explored. Armed conflict in an age of mass communications meant that everyone was on the front-line in the propaganda war. Given the propinquity of Italian enemy territories in Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia, the British territories in East and Central Africa were directly vulnerable to any propaganda offensive mounted by the enemy.

#### Organising the propaganda arm in East and Central Africa

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<sup>15</sup> Crowder, op.cit., p.2 and pp.18-20.

In September 1939 machinery for the conduct of propaganda in and about Britain's African colonies was in its infancy. As has been seen until this point the Colonial Office's publicity organisation was limited in the person of a single Press Officer who was shared with the Dominions Office. In the pre-war period the colonial empire was not well supplied by news from the outside world depending in the main on commercial agencies. For a record of day to day events the main channels of communications were Reuters, a limited number of colonial newspaper correspondents and the Empire Service of the BBC.<sup>16</sup> The development of internal broadcasting arrangements even in the larger colonies left much to be desired.<sup>17</sup> In February 1939 detailed planning began for the establishment of a Ministry of Information on the outbreak of war. No separate machinery was envisioned for the Colonial Office, which would work with the Colonial Section of the Ministry of Information's Empire Publicity Division in conducting propaganda in the colonies. An officer from the Colonial Office would be seconded to the MOI for the duration of the war to ensure close liaison between the two Ministries.

In the African colonies the colonial governments were faced with the task of creating publicity organisations from scratch. As in London, little attention had been paid before the outbreak of war to the need of these colonial governments to articulate their policies to the populations in their territories by establishing Information Offices, beyond the personal contacts the District and Provincial Commissioners had with the populations in the territories for which they were responsible. The outbreak of the Second World War forced the colonial governments to engage in propaganda activities of which they had little experience. Thus the story of the propaganda efforts made by the Empire Division of the MOI, the Colonial Office and the colonial governments in the first part of the war

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<sup>16</sup> For Reuters and the empire, c.f., Donald Read, 'Reuters: News Agency of the British Empire', Contemporary Record, 8:2, Autumn 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.177.



reflects the problems and improvisations associated with this new activity. There were disputes between the MOI and the Colonial Office. There were difficulties in financing and staffing propaganda. There was the problem of trying to resolve the paradox of ensuring uniformity in propaganda because of the necessity of speaking with one voice in all British wartime propaganda output whilst also acknowledging the regional diversity of the colonial empire and the adjustments that would be necessary to appeal to particular audiences. There were choices to be made over type and content of propaganda. If the result then appeared to be haphazard this was not surprising. The publicists were learning on the job.

The empire was recognised as crucial to the war effort and this was reflected in the priority it was given by pre-war planners. The order of priority was as follows: '(1) Home, (2) Empire, (3) Allies, (4) Forces in the Field, (5) USA, (6) Enemy, (7) Neutrals other than the USA'. The reasoning was:

if the Home front goes, everything goes; if the Empire front goes the Empire disintegrates; if the Allies front goes the chances of victory are greatly diminished; of all the neutrals the USA is likely to be the most important.<sup>18</sup>

Publicity in the British empire was founded on four principles: 'information should be truthful and straightforward', it was to be 'expressively adapted to the country or group of countries for which it was intended' and the 'maximum devolution both in the distribution and in the final preparation of material of all kinds'. Territories would, it was envisioned, be grouped together, co-ordinated and supervised by a Regional Information Officer, possibly a retired colonial service officer. Responsibility for formulating policy in respect of empire propaganda and for preparing necessary central propaganda, like all British wartime propaganda lay with the MOI and responsibility for the execution of policy, distributing material in the colonies and adapting material to meet

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<sup>18</sup> PRO, INF1/709, MOI Publicity Division - Central Organisation, memorandum by Rhodes, August-September 1938.

local requirements laid with the colonial Governments.<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that at this stage the Colonial Office had no objections to the principle of MOI responsibility over policy for propaganda in the colonial empire. Perhaps it took the actual experience of dealing with the consequences of this decision to change attitudes towards the question of responsibility before action was taken. The principles of devolution and specialisation proved to be a little optimistic. The issue of financing propaganda issued by the colonial governments, albeit based on MOI material customised to local needs was not addressed.

This was, however, for the future. The colonial governments were sent a highly secret despatch in May 1939, even before the House of Commons was told that a MOI would be established in the event of war on 15 June 1939. This despatch informed the Governors that a MOI would be established in the event of war, asked for their cooperation with its work and suggested ways of helping the planning for the imperial propaganda effort. The colonial governments were asked to furnish London with information about the press in each territory, including political affiliations and organisations with which each newspaper was connected, size of audience and its 'utility' as a propaganda channel in time of war; information about the broadcasting facilities in each colony including suggestions for improvement; information about the distribution and display of films in the territories, including the films' origin, popularity and whether additional means of display were required like the provision of cinema vans; information about the existence of private or semi-official bodies which could be used to disseminate information, like the churches, clubs and British firms; information about the activities of foreign powers and lastly the broad nature of propaganda desirable in the event of war. Once the war had begun the colonial governments would be expected to provide the MOI with

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<sup>19</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, memorandum no.230, 'Publicity in the British Empire', Publicity Division of the MOI: Planning Section, 20 June 1939.



reviews of the press, broadcasts and films, periodic suggestions about the kind of publicity which would be suitable for each particular colony, an assessment of the effect of British propaganda on the populations and assessments of the impact of the war on the 'psychology' of the population. To facilitate these new tasks, the colonial governments were urged to appoint an Information Officer.<sup>20</sup>

As part of preparations for the war, the Treasury proposed to give the Colonial Office an additional 30,000 pounds on the Colonial and Middle East Services vote for the purchase of equipment such as cinema vans in peacetime. The Economic Department of the Colonial Office was incredulous. Propaganda was not on their list of priorities,

it is rather ironic that HMG is prepared to provide free of cost to Colonial Governments equipment for which they have not asked and which many of them do not want, whereas Colonial Governments are themselves required to pay for essential weapons and military equipment for which they have been asking for years.<sup>21</sup>

The surveys from the colonies which were the result of the circular despatch reveal that the potential of broadcasting does not appear to have been recognised in the colonies, as we saw in chapter one the expense involved in establishing government-controlled stations was prohibitive. Indeed, colonial governments were reluctant to embark on any new activities which required new budgetary commitments in peacetime let alone war. In addition, there seems to have been an overemphasis on the press and written materials as the major conduit of propaganda. While of course this medium was more permanent and suitable for the Europeans and educated audiences, account does not seem to be taken of the literacy levels of the African audiences in East and Central Africa even if materials were produced in the vernacular. The importance of radio and film however was increasingly recognised as

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<sup>20</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, circular despatch to all colonies, 15 May 1939.

<sup>21</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, minute by Lee, 26 July 1939.

the war developed as non-printed materials were increasingly favoured. As far as content of propaganda, the recommendations reflect two attitudes: first, to leave the African as undisturbed as possible, continuing good administrative practice and second, if any propaganda at all was necessary, to emphasise the evils of Nazism. It is also important to note that observations on the suitability of the various medium for communication to the African populations would have been based largely on personal observations and anecdotal evidence rather than the result of any kind of scientific examination. Indeed the assessments of the unsuitability of sound film as a propaganda conduit was underestimated because African audiences were seen as too 'unsophisticated' or 'backward' appears to contemporary audiences patronising.

Kenya asked for guidance on propaganda techniques to advise a publicity committee under the Director of Education. Copies of Lasswell's Propaganda Technique in the Great War and Rogerson's Propaganda in the Next War were sent to Kenya in May.<sup>22</sup> Kenya voiced initial reservations about embarking on or making the financial commitment to innovative schemes to transmit propaganda. Although Kenya was one of the few territories with its own radio station, broadcasting to the African was not thought to be a 'practical proposition' or at this stage even likely to serve 'any particular purpose'. While the largest European settler population of East Africa was understandably well catered for by the press in Kenya, Africans posed the greatest difficulty.<sup>23</sup> The majority of Africans were non-literate, and even those who were literate did 'not pass on to others such printed information as is available to them'. Plans were, however made to establish a government controlled publication. Personal contact with Africans was viewed as being important and it was felt that it would be

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<sup>22</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Kenya to Colonial Office, 16 March 1939; Colonial Office to Kenya, 10 May 1939.

<sup>23</sup> The African to settler population in Kenya was roughly 200 to 1 at this time while the Indian population was roughly double the European population.



'vital' for Administrative Officers to organize and address native meetings in wartime. While travelling cinema vans were regarded favourably, Kenya did not possess facilities of their own.<sup>24</sup>

The most important English publication in Kenya, indeed in East Africa in general, among the Europeans and educated Africans and Asians was the East African Standard, which also owned the Mombasa Times and had a controlling share of the Tanganyika Standard. It had a close relationship with the Kenyan government, strongly supported European settlement, at times in opposition to Indian views and was tolerant and encouraging to 'native aspirations', not necessarily compatible attitudes it could be argued. The Kenya Daily Mail was a bi-lingual English and Gujarati newspaper. It was widely read by Indians and some Europeans particularly in the coastal region of Kenya and strongly supported the political rights and privileges of the Indians but seldom expressed extreme views. Weekly periodicals included the English Sunday Post was read by Europeans and educated Indians throughout East Africa. It strongly supported European settlement and was often critical of government policy. The Kenya Weekly News was devoted to settler interests and was widely read by Europeans and the farming community in particular. The bi-lingual English and Gujarati Colonial Times was linked to the Labour Trade Union of East Africa, the Indian Association and the East African Indian National Congress. It was an important medium through which the activities of the Indian political bodies were made known to the Indian communities in East Africa. As such it strongly supported Indian rights and privileges. African vernacular publications included the independent Luo Magazine read by the Luo peoples of the region, passed from one to another in towns and in the Native Reserves. Of 'considerable importance', and a publication to be monitored carefully in the future, was the Kikuyu Central Association's monthly paper Mwigwithania. Its London representative was Jomo

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<sup>24</sup> PRO, C0323/1663/7, Kenya to Colonial Office, 6 July 1939.

Kenyatta. It strongly supported African, and particularly Kikuyu, rights and privileges and had a 'slightly communistic flavour from time to time through Jomo Kenyatta's association with the Communist Party in the United Kingdom'. Its Monthly circulation of 1,200 belied its true importance. It was estimated that as many as 50 people saw each copy and it reached an even wider audience as its contents were often spread by word of mouth. Other periodicals included trade, school, church and police magazines, and the Nazi Party monthly Ost Afrika Warte.<sup>25</sup>

The cinema had been popular with the African populations in Kenya, in particular, cartoons and the films made by the EMB. The concern voiced in Britain before the war about the dominance of foreign films in the colonial market appears to be justified; only 25% of films came from Britain, the vast majority were of American origin. The most popular films in the Indian community were those depicting Indian life. The major problem was that the government lacked facilities to display films themselves. Kenya for its climate and scenery was thought to be almost as 'ideal as Hollywood for production purposes' and it was surprising that 'no British company has yet realised the value of the conditions existing in Kenya'.<sup>26</sup>

The former German colony and League of Nations mandated territory with a small European population less well-entrenched than its Kenyan neighbour, Tanganyika thought that the kind of propaganda desirable in wartime would be '(a) protective and (b) of a tranquilising character'. The most effective means of 'tranquilising' the Africans would be 'the least possible dislocation of the British policy of trusteeship...if normal education and medical facilities were to be kept in operation there is little doubt they would exert a valuable and beneficial influence in maintaining the morale of the African population'. Tanganyika it can be seen did not favour widespread or aggressive publicity, particularly as far as

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<sup>25</sup> ibid. Kikuyu political activities were suppressed on security grounds during the war.

<sup>26</sup> ibid.



the African populations were concerned.<sup>27</sup> The smaller settler population than Kenya was reflected in the range of periodicals produced in the territory. Tanganyikans read a lot of newspapers from areas outside Tanganyika, for example the South African papers, the Natal Mercury and the Johannesburg Star and papers from India, the Illustrated Weekly of India and the Bombay Chronicle. Of the newspapers produced in Tanganyika the only English language paper was the Tanganyika Standard which while claiming to be non-political and devoted to the interests of Tanganyika was nevertheless owned by the Kenyan group of the East African Standard. Its circulation in northern Tanganyika was restricted anyway because for geographical reasons the East African Standard from Nairobi arrived more quickly. The Indian community was served by two bi-lingual English and Gujerati newspapers the Tanganyika Opinion and the Tanganyika Herald. The Opinion was a pro-Gandhi and pro-Indian nationalist paper, liberal but inclined to the left and was also read by Indians in Uganda and Kenya. The Herald claimed to be non-political and to be interested in protecting the interests of Indians in Tanganyika. The two most important vernacular papers for the African populations were the Swahili monthly Mambo Leo and the bi-lingual Kwetu. Mambo Leo was government owned and controlled and was seen as the 'most valuable newspaper for communicating information to the African population' as literate Africans read the paper to non-literate Africans. Kwetu was produced every 18 days and was pro-British, aiming to stimulate the Africans 'to better themselves'.<sup>28</sup>

Tanganyika did not have a broadcasting station of its own. Programmes were supplied by the nearest station in Nairobi. Kenya and South Africa supplied Tanganyika with commercial films and newsreels. The majority, 68% of feature films shown in Tanganyika were American in origin, while only 22% came from Britain. The type of film most favoured by the Africans seemed to be musicals and

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<sup>27</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Tanganyika to Colonial Office, 15 July 1939.

<sup>28</sup> ibid.

historical films like Victoria the Great and any film featuring Deanna Durbin was 'assured of a large audience'.<sup>29</sup>

Uganda, the 'black man's country' of the three East African territories had few European settlers, and the most significant immigrant population was Indian. Uganda also had a more educated African population than the other territories. The Bugandan people with their own king, the Kabaka and 'parliament' the Lukiko dominated a tribally diverse territory. The Governor of Uganda, Sir Philip Mitchell\*, had spent all his career in East and Central Africa and was later Governor of Kenya, was sympathetic to the role of propaganda in the event of war. He thought that the Ugandan government could expect the cooperation of the Missionary societies, the Native Authorities and the native government of Buganda. Propaganda most desirable during the war would be the 'provision of regular and reliable news, with particular stress upon the part played by British African and Indian combatants'. References to any enemy anti-Islamic action would be of help in propaganda for the Muslim communities. Other useful themes would be allusion to the vital role of Ugandan cotton and other products in the Imperial war effort and personal messages from and news about the Royal Family. Above all, however, he thought that as little disturbance to the African way of life as possible would be the best propaganda, 'the maintenance of produce markets would... be far more effective and reassuring than any other form of propaganda'.<sup>30</sup>

In Uganda as far as the press was concerned, the East African Standard was the leading English newspaper read by all communities 'particularly in times of crisis'. The other English language publication was the Uganda Herald, an 'independent weekly, but pro-British'. The Herald was thought to be 'a very useful medium' whose proprietors were willing to place the resources of the firm at the disposal

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<sup>29</sup> ibid.

<sup>30</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Uganda to Colonial Office, 14 August 1939.



of the government in time of need. Uganda produced no Indian publications of its own, but 43 Indian publications from other sources were read in Uganda. The African community was served by a number of publications in Lugandan. A useful medium for propaganda was the weekly Matalisi or the 'Messenger' which was read by the majority of Africans and was independent. However, the twice weekly Musale or 'Leader' serving the Catholic community of Ugandans, was not considered a reliable medium because of the uncertainty of the owner's political and local outlook. It was felt that the thrice monthly Tula-Nkunn-yonnyole or 'Sit down and I will Explain' could possibly be induced to publish government communications. The twice weekly Dobozi Iya Buganda or 'Uganda Voice' was totally unreliable as the then editor had been prosecuted twice for 'libellous matter directed against the Buganda government and Ministers'. The fortnightly Munyonyozi or 'Reporter' which was founded in 1922 and the Gambuze or 'Ask Me What News' were also seen as cooperative with the government.<sup>31</sup>

For financial reasons Uganda had postponed the implementation of a broadcasting scheme which had been tested in the pre-war period. In any case few Africans owned wireless sets of their own. Instead the Ugandan government was willing to consider broadcasting daily bulletins through the establishment of a public address system. Uganda possessed no cinema vans but in the cinemas in towns the kind of films most favoured in the Indian community were either historical, mythological or 'so-called "modern life" with a moral attached'. Films in English would only appeal to a minority of Africans. But it was felt that action films would find the greatest favour like Robin Hood, Tarzan or Sanders of the River. Films of the modern European comedy variety were not considered suitable for the African. While the African liked to be amused he 'must understand the film to appreciate it'.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> ibid.

<sup>32</sup> ibid.

The Provincial Commissioner in the Northern Province of Uganda thought that propaganda should not be over-active as the Africans in his area were 'very excitable and warlike'. He suggested a number of suitable themes:

- a) contrast between pre-war German methods and British methods
- b) rape of Abyssinia and its consequent misery
- c) the benefits accruing from British administration
- d) the aims of Nazism and Fascism, and their effect on African life if introduced
- e) should not be confined to local problems only
- f) should not be associated with religion since it is our policy that religion is a matter for a man's conscience and not for the state.

He thought, however, that reference to Abyssinia should be handled with caution because 'in the minds of some of the Africans we are not free from blame for what has occurred'.<sup>33</sup>

The government of Zanzibar thought it would be difficult to define a propaganda line peculiar to Zanzibar. Zanzibar's population was Arab rather than African, but as a trading territory had economic links with the East African coastline. The Resident, Sir John Hathorn Hall\*, subsequently Governor of Aden and Uganda thought the inhabitants of Zanzibar were 'normal' in their outlook and would only be stirred into action if their Islamic religion were threatened. Therefore, he recommended that attention could be drawn to the 'Nazi system of state worship' and the repression of religious worship in Germany which would 'doubtless be extended to Islam if that stood in the way of Nazi aspirations for world domination'. Hall thought that propaganda should show Britain had 'been forced into a war to call a halt to further aggression and the swallowing up of small nations'. As far as Italy was concerned her recent occupation of Albania 'could be turned to good account'.<sup>34</sup>

The main conduits for propaganda in Zanzibar would be the press and pamphlets. The main newspaper was the English and Arabic weekly, the Al Falag or 'Dawn' read by the Arab

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<sup>33</sup> ibid.

<sup>34</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Zanzibar to Colonial Office, 21 July 1939.



community in particular. Although the tone of Al Falag tended to be anti-Indian traders and was somewhat critical of the Government, it was on the whole loyal. The English and Gujerati weekly, Zanzibar Voice, was read by an influential section of the public, but it tended to be 'intolerant' of British rule mainly because the editor had been imprisoned for the misuse of public funds when he was a government employee in 1927. The English and Gujerati Samacher weekly was more moderate than the Zanzibar Voice. The Samacher was read by well-to-do Indians upon whom the uneducated depended for a lead and thus had influence beyond its actual circulation of 1500 a week. The African weekly Kiswahili newspaper Zanzibari had only been published for a month but the proprietor was keen to 'further the objects of the Government' and wished to institute propaganda for health, hygiene and education, and counter any bazaar rumours which came to his attention.<sup>35</sup>

Broadcasting in Zanzibar was limited as there was no station in Zanzibar itself and the few who owned their own radio sets listened to broadcasts from Kenya. In the towns, however, many listened to German and Italian broadcasts. German propoganda to the Arabs was at times so violent that there had been protests in the local Arab press. Although propoganda was an area in which Germany was perceived to excel and was listened to keenly it was not thought to have an appreciable affect as it was 'realised that it is propoganda'.<sup>36</sup>

Zanzibar was supplied with films from Nairobi and South Africa. Cinema owners reported that the taste of the people of Zanzibar was 'very low' as they preferred 'stunt films, singing, dancing, a good rough and tumble fight, thrillers and tap dancing'. Drama was not popular mainly because the majority could not understand what was being said.<sup>37</sup>

In Northern Rhodesia, where the Copperbelt was crucial

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<sup>35</sup> ibid.

<sup>36</sup> ibid.

<sup>37</sup> ibid.

empire's war effort, but vulnerable to industrial disputes, the government thought that propaganda could emphasise to the government's advantage what would happen if the territory came under the control of Germany or Italy and how such an eventuality would be to the detriment to the inhabitants of Northern Rhodesia, 'indirect rule would cease and all the Native Authorities would cease to exercise power', higher taxation and forced labour might be exacted. The main propaganda channel was again to be the press. The English weekly, the Livingstone Mail was limited in its circulation to the European population and reported the views of its proprietor Leopold Moore who was an elected member of the Legislative Council. Another newspaper with a small circulation was the 'independent' English weekly, Northern Rhodesia Advertiser which was read mainly in the mining area of the territory, and would be of importance during the war as copper from mines in Northern Rhodesia would be a vital raw material. The twice weekly English Mine Workers' Union Bulletin could also be used as a channel of propaganda particularly in matters which concerned the miners. Started in the wake of the African Copperbelt strikes of 1935, Mutende was the official 'non-political' government publication for the African population of the territory; a monthly in English, Bemba, Tanga, Lozi and Nyanja. With a circulation of 5,500 it was considered a valuable, if slow, channel of communication. The government would also be keeping a careful eye on the Watch Tower movement, the Jehovah Witnesses. Although there was no organised German propaganda in Northern Rhodesia, there was a suspicion that the Watch Tower might be utilised for German propaganda purposes.<sup>38</sup> Films for European audiences in cinemas and works canteens were supplied by Johannesburg. Northern Rhodesia, however, did not possess any travelling cinema vans of its own to show films to Africans. As far as broadcasting to the Africans was concerned Northern Rhodesia looked to London to provide

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<sup>38</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/8, Northern Rhodesia to Colonial Office, 23 June 1939.



12 public address systems.<sup>39</sup>

The broad nature of propaganda desired for Nyasaland would be that which was designed to inculcate a 'full appreciation of the unity and might of the British Commonwealth of their Majesties the King and Queen as the head of this free association'. The Nyasaland government thought the task would be eased because there were 'no demands for constitutional advance which account need be taken'. The best method of disseminating propaganda of this nature to African audiences would be through use of the cinema accompanied by running commentaries in the appropriate vernacular. With few Europeans, a handful of settlers and officials the propaganda effort would be concerned primarily with African opinion. The problem of producing material in the vernacular was compounded by the existence of several linguistic groups in Nyasaland, speaking Chinyanja, Chimang'anja, Chichewa, Chitumbuka, Chitonga and Chiyao. Although the Lao peoples professed to be Islamic it was not felt that they would be influenced to any appreciable extent by Islamic propaganda 'of whatever colour'. Films for the Africans were supplied from Johannesburg but the government of Nyasaland did not have any facilities for either producing or displaying films themselves. It was, however, hoped that the cinema vans of the Tea Marketing Expansion Board could be utilised in time of emergency.<sup>40</sup>

The press in Nyasaland included the twice weekly English Nyasaland Times. This paper had no political leanings or affiliations and was owned by the Nyasaland Motor General Insurance Company, the Nyasaland Railway, the Trans-Zambesi Rail Company and Imperial Tobacco. The Nyasaland Times was widely read by the few Europeans, a few Asians and Africans in Nyasaland and also in North and South Rhodesia. It could also be stated 'with confidence' that in an emergency the full resources of the Nyasaland

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<sup>39</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/8, Northern Rhodesia to Colonial Office, 21 June 1939.

<sup>40</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/8, Nyasaland to Colonial Office, 21 June 1939.

Times would be at the disposal of the government. The Nyasaland Times also owned the monthly Chinyanja and English Nkhani za Nyasaland, which had a circulation among the African and Asian populations of 2,000. This publication received a government subsidy, which meant to all effective purposes it was under government control and would have 'certain, if not great utility' in time of war. In addition, Nyasaland received the English papers the Rhodesia Herald from Salisbury, the Sunday Times from Johannesburg and the East African Standard from Nairobi and the vernacular Mutende from Northern Rhodesia and Bantu Mirror from Salisbury.<sup>41</sup>

No local broadcasting service existed in Nyasaland, and while it was conceded that the distribution of wireless sets might be of some value, it was thought by the government that any effort along these lines was unlikely to produce 'outstandingly useful results'. The problem was that even Africans with a good knowledge of official or commercial English found it difficult to understand broadcast English because it tended to be too rapid and used unfamiliar words. The sound of the King's voice, however, would make a deep impression for 'although his words may not be understood, it is worthy of remark that His Majesty's deliberate and distinct tones are more easily understandable by the educated African listener than the generality of voices heard'. No foreign governments were believed to be trying to specifically influence the people of Nyasaland, although German, Italian, Portuguese and French radio broadcasts were received in Nyasaland and were listened to by the Europeans they were not thought to have any effect.<sup>42</sup> It seems then that broadcasts in the vernacular were not even considered.

A circular despatch was sent to the African colonies from the Colonial Office on the 2 September 1939 asking the colonial Governors to appoint immediately a full time Information Officer and also set out principles for their

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<sup>41</sup> ibid.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/8, Nyasaland to Colonial Office, 30 June 1939.



guidance. Publicity would be 'truthful', 'objective' and disseminated with speed. The first object of British publicity was:

[to] emphasise the ethical aspects of the struggle, showing Britain as the champion of smaller and weaker peoples, asking only the right to lead their own lives.

And the second objective was to stress 'the material as well as the moral strength of the allies'.<sup>43</sup> Initial emphasis would be on truthful news publicity about the course of the war.

Planning was also based on the additional principles that the publicity produced would be 'expressly adapted' to the territory for which it was intended; that there would be the maximum possible 'devolution both in the distribution and in the final preparation of material of all kinds'; that to the greatest extent possible private or commercial distribution channels would be used. As will be seen the instinct to devolve the preparation of propaganda, although sound in the desire to cater to individual audiences did not happen until much later in the war. Devolution implied local production organisations. But planning was undertaken without due consideration of how to finance activities in the colonies. As a result unless there was a willingness on the part of the colonial governments to finance propaganda, the colonies would have to rely on the more general material supplied to them by the Empire Division of the MOI.

Significantly it was desired that the colonial dependencies would be grouped together regionally, i.e. there would be an East African grouping of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar and a 'Rhodesian' group of North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This regional approach was evident in the way in which the Colonial Section of the MOI's Empire Division was initially organised and staffed.

The economic interdependence and the geographical contiguity of the Central African territories and the ease of treating the European populations of the combined

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<sup>43</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10 circular despatch to all colonies, 2 September 1939; Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.178-9.

territories (almost five times that of Kenya) suggested the regional approach was best. The idea of a separate 'Rhodesian' group, however, was soon abandoned, because the territories were at different stages in their political development. Southern Rhodesia was a Crown Colony which had enjoyed full responsible government in domestic affairs since 1923 and came under the supervision of the Dominions Office when the Colonial Office and Dominions Office were divided in 1925. Southern Rhodesia had a European population of 60,000 while the Crown Colonies of Northern Rhodesia with its European population of 10,000 and Nyasaland, inhabited 'almost entirely by natives' were both under the supervision of the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office was already concerned that the racial policies of Southern Rhodesia were creeping northwards and was sensitive to the political implications of encouraging the idea that the three Central African territories would be treated as a unit, particularly if a Regional Information Office was located in Salisbury. Instead, Southern Rhodesia was covered under Dominions Office arrangements with the MOI. Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were later incorporated into the East African group under the post of the MOI's Principal Information Officer in Nairobi.<sup>44</sup>

Based on the information received from East Africa the Ministry of Information drew up their regional propaganda plan. In view of the fact that British East Africa formed one continuous block of territory, it was thought that there were obvious advantages in having a group publicity officer to supervise the activities of the territorial information officers (this, in spite of the reservations of Tanganyika and Uganda about the Closer Union question, of dominance by Kenya which, it was feared, meant in real terms domination by the European settlers). The publicity machinery already in existence in these territories would be utilised in time of war. For example in Tanganyika,

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<sup>44</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/10, MOI Publicity Division memorandum, 'Publicity in the British Empire', 20 June 1939; PRO, CO323/1663/8, MOI, Empire Division, Memo. No.341, Southern Rhodesia, northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, September 1939; minute by Poynton, 7 September 1939.



there was the 'Central Publicity Committee' chaired by the General Manager of Tanganyika railways which had been established to aid the Government in encouraging tourist traffic to Tanganyika. It was anticipated that missionary societies would cooperate in helping to keep the Africans informed about the war, particularly in Uganda where there was an 'exceptionally high proportion of converts to Christianity'. It was hoped, perhaps optimistically, that the colonial Governments could rely on the cooperation of the local leadership. In the Ugandan Province of Buganda where the ruler, the Kabaka, appointed all chiefs and exercised legislative authority subject to the approval of the Governor, it was hoped that the Kabaka would cooperate with the colonial Government. In Kenya it was hoped that a local committee of 'selected Africans' could be established to cooperate with the Information Officer. The Indian Advisory Council and the Arab Advisory Council in Kenya were also seen as bodies which could advise and assist in organising wartime propaganda.<sup>45</sup> It was assumed that the East African German populations, particularly the 3000 in Tanganyika, would be interned during the war. Thus the problem of enemy activities in the territories themselves would be controlled<sup>46</sup> but not, however the impact of enemy broadcasts.

For many purposes the European populations of East Africa would be treated as an extension of the white populations of South Africa and the Rhodesias and supplied by press material from London. This would be of particular importance in the kind of propaganda produced for Kenya which had a sizeable settler population. In planning publicity for the African populations it was of prime importance to avoid anything 'at all liable to disturb instead of reinforcing patriotic sentiment'. Here local District Officers would be a major method of contact

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<sup>45</sup> Again rather optimistic when the common view of the Kenyan Indian attitude towards the war was disinterest and business as usual.

<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, MOI Publicity Division: Planning Section, Memo. No. 240, East Africa, 8 June 1939.

between the Governments and the Africans through the medium of lectures.<sup>47</sup> In printed material, it was proposed that local regional differences would be catered for by producing publicity in the vernacular of each area. Regional differences would also be acknowledged in pictorial propaganda, for example in Tanganyika a poster designed for the 'war-like Masai might well be undesirable for a less robust people such as the Rundi'. But when the territories relied on London's output this ambition was necessarily abandoned for the Empire Division produced for a general audience. Similarly, the greater literacy of the Ugandans had to be taken into account. In the event of war it would be necessary to keep the vernacular press supplied with more advanced type of background material than in other parts of Africa. As an island, Zanzibar would also have special treatment and stress would be laid on the 'ability of British sea power to afford protection'.<sup>48</sup>

The lessons of the 'Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment' which showed films to Africans in 1937 were recognised. Film was considered to be one of the most valuable means of influencing African opinion. It was thought that only films of a high photographic quality would be effective. The sound film was considered to be too rapid for the 'native mind' to be effective. For this reason silent films would be shown, accompanied by a running commentary by word of mouth on the part of a commentator 'who really teaches'. It was hoped that such films could be produced locally. A great emphasis would be placed on providing the territories with cinema vans from Britain to show the films to the Africans.<sup>49</sup> But again this would require finance.

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<sup>47</sup> ibid. But as one District Officer in a remote district of Barotseland, Northern Rhodesia found this was easier said than done: 'trying to talk about the war with Africans was like trying to talk to deaf mutes about conditions in Mars', Rosaleen Smyth, 'War Propaganda ... in Northern Rhodesia', pp.350-1.

<sup>48</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, MOI Publicity Division: Planning Section, Memo. No. 240, East Africa, 8 June 1939.

<sup>49</sup> ibid.



As previously noted, few Africans owned their own wireless sets. Even in Kenya out of a population of 19,200 Europeans, only 1,833 (in December 1937) had taken out licenses for receiving sets. Therefore, in urban areas clubs, hotels and cinemas would be induced to equip themselves with loudspeakers to transmit radio broadcasts. Similarly, the territorial governments would be encouraged to provide public address systems in market places and town squares where the public could gather at stated hours.<sup>50</sup> As with film the financial implications of carrying through such projects was a major factor against the implementation of such plans.

The appointment of Information Officers posed initial problems in the territories. In wartime conditions suitable candidates were thin on the ground and the territorial governments tended to give their Education Officers the additional task of Information Officer. This development was not favoured by the Colonial Office because it would add a further burden to their duties and there were obvious dangers in so public an association of 'education' with 'propaganda'.

The Colonial Office also objected to the appointment of certain individuals to such positions. For example, the case of the appointment of an unofficial settler, Major Ewart Scott Grogan, as the Chairman of the Kenyan Central Information Committee illustrates not only the manpower shortages faced by the colonies, but also the ever present frictions in the relationship between the Colonial Office and settler ambitions. Truly a legend in his own lifetime Grogan, born in 1874 this art-school drop out was the first European to walk from the Cape to Cairo, an expedition he undertook to prove to his prospective in-laws his worth as a husband for their daughter. As one of the original Kenya pioneers, he and his wife settled in Kenya in 1904. Grogan was a fine orator and flamboyant rival to Lord Delamere and powerful leader of the settler community. In 1907 he was elected President of the Colonists Association but lost this position after a notorious incident in which he

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<sup>50</sup> ibid.

publicly flogged three Kikuyu following an attack on his sister. In 1910 he became the President of the Convention of Associations (the settlers' parliament), was opposed to Indian immigration, was a member of the war council of Kenya during the First World War and saw service in German East Africa in 1917. He was active in Kenyan politics throughout his life he retired from the Legislative Council in 1956 at the age of 82.<sup>51</sup> A consistent thorn in the Colonial Office's side, Sir Arthur Dawe, head of the African Division, was amazed when Grogan was appointed Chairman of the Central Information Committee,

the appointment was fantastic... the whole objective of publicity in Africa during the war is to guide native opinion in the right direction: and the selection of Major Grogan for this role is really shattering. He is a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary: and incidentally hated by Indians. He is now 65 years old and he struck me as definitely senile when I saw him a year ago.

The Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, agreed but the matter required careful handling as Grogan was the Governor Sir Henry Brooke-Popham's\* personal appointee. Brooke-Popham came back to London in October for consultations with the Colonial Office. While he was on his way back to Kenya the Secretary of State took advantage of his absence by cabling the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya, in charge during the Governor's absence, suggesting the removal of Grogan, by doubting his suitability and by underlying the importance of gaining the 'support of the native communities'.<sup>52</sup>

Grogan was removed from the Committee and his place was taken by Lacey, Kenya's Education Officer who until a more suitable candidate could be found, became Director of Information. In the future only those 'with a knowledge of natives and the best methods of transmitting news to them'

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<sup>51</sup> Errol Trzebinski, The Kenya Pioneers (London, 1986), pp. 59, 62, 86, 95-7, 120, 126-9 and 154-7.

<sup>52</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Dawe to Parkinson, 12 September 1939; minute by MacDonald, 16 September 1939; minute by Dawe, 3 October 1939 and Colonial Office to OAG, 5 October 1939.



would be chosen to serve on the committee.<sup>53</sup>

At first the East African governors favoured the Ministry of Information's plan for the establishment of the post of Regional Information Officer, but the problem developed over where the regional office should be located and who the Officer should be. Lacey, the Education Officer in Kenya, was suggested but not only was education in Kenya in a 'bad way', it was also not considered politic for the Officer to be based in Kenya where he might not be able to be 'independent in face of the sectionalist interests' i.e. white settler interests, which were vocal in Nairobi. Instead it was decided that for the time being the machinery of the East African Governors Conference could be used to ensure regional coordination.<sup>54</sup>

#### War Propaganda During the 'Bore War': Relations Between the MOI and the Colonial Office

Following the outbreak of war and in accordance with the Reithian maxim for all British propaganda that news was 'the shocktroops of propaganda', propaganda was primarily a news based effort to keep African opinion 'informed as to the progress of the war, the objects at stake and their relation to local conditions etc, and to stimulate and maintain local sympathy with those objects'.<sup>55</sup>

To help the Information Officers in the colonies in their task the MOI transmitted three kinds of telegrams. The 'Guido' series was for the governors' eyes only containing guidance on matters of importance relating to the war. It was a matter of the governors' personal discretion if information contained in Guidos was to be used in propaganda. The 'Empax' series of telegrams were material of a non-confidential nature, including information about the progress of the war, military

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<sup>53</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Kenya to Colonial Office, 7 October 1939.

<sup>54</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/7, Minute by Poynton, 21 September 1939; minute by Pedler, 22 September 1939.

<sup>55</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/11, 'Note on Colonial Section, Empire Publicity Division, MOI', by Seel, October 1939.

achievements, daily political events with press comment and parliamentary criticism, in such a way to allow textual reproduction. The third series, 'Datel' was introduced later on in the war to provide the Information Officers with 'inspired background' (or what we would call the 'spin' today) in order for them to advise the local press.<sup>56</sup>

A major problem was that there was little news to publicise in terms of actual fighting during the 'phoney war' or what was described as the 'bore war' period.<sup>57</sup> The outbreak of war did not bring an enemy airborne attack of the British Isles; the war was not 'running to type' and there was not 'the amount of news available which is expected in time of war'.<sup>58</sup> Consequently there was little to publicise apart from justifications for why the British empire was at war.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of war news the material the MOI sent to the African colonies which was also designed to explain the nature of the enemy, used what one official dubbed the 'immortal work', Hitler's Mein Kampf. One African governor found this good propaganda for the 'black' population of his colony, particularly in the passages in which Hitler referred to them as '..."semi-civilised apes"...''. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, agreed and felt it should be

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<sup>56</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.183.

<sup>57</sup> Phillip Knightly, The First Casualty: the War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth Maker, (London, 1982), p.208. See also the dedication to Randolph Churchill in Evelyn Waugh's Put Out More Flags, (London, 1943), p.7 which satirises the exploits of Basil Seal and Ambrose Silk in 'the odd, dead period before the Churchillian renaissance, which people called as the time the Great Bore War'.

<sup>58</sup> PRO, CO323/1652/35, minute by Bigg, 10 November 1939.

<sup>59</sup> The Empire Division prepared 3,500 copies of a pamphlet explaining the war, 'The Outbreak of War' to the colonies, PRO, CO323/1663/2, Hodson to Colonial Office, 28 September 1939.



used 'for all it is worth' in Africa.<sup>60</sup> The Colonial Office helped the BBC to put them in touch with people who were in the colonies at the outbreak of war in order to broadcast the initial reactions in the colonies to the war.<sup>61</sup>

The Colonial Section of the Empire Division sent a steady stream of printed and photographic material to the colonies during the first months of the war.<sup>62</sup> This material was a mixture of specially commissioned pieces: a Chatham House offprint, 'The Political and Strategic Importance of Turkey', Great Britain, France and the War' by Paul Reynaud, 'Anglo-French Plan for Economic Collaboration' by Donald Tyemer, 'The Deeper Causes of the War and the Issues Involved in It - the Herd Instinct: For Good and Evil', by Gilbert Murray and 'The War and the Crisis for the Spirit of Man', by W.R. Matthews, Dean of St. Pauls; MOI standard fare: 'The Resources of the Empire', 'Why the Navy Guards Her Secrets', 'India's Future: the Minority Problem', 'The Truth About German Society', 'Viscount Halifax - a Personal Study', 'Who began the War', 'Britain's Roads in Wartime', 'The British Army is Fitter Than Ever', 'Australia Makes Munitions', 'New Methods of Dealing with Magnetic Mines' and 'Britain Will Fight to the Last Man'; articles from British newspapers: in particular from the Observer 'Hitler, Stalin and the Duce' and 'Himmler's Bomb Plot'; transcripts of radio broadcasts: from the BBC's 'War Commentaries' and the series 'Matters of the Moment', the texts of speeches made in parliament on the war situation, all explaining the

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<sup>60</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/11, Poynton to Seel, 18 September 1939; PRO, CO323/1663/2, British Guiana to Colonial Office, 13 September 1939.

<sup>61</sup> PRO, CO323/1651/19, Seel to Poynton, 8 September 1939.

<sup>62</sup> By the end of the war the MOI's monthly distribution of photographs reached: 6,500 prints of news photographs for 33 colonies, 1,000 prints of exhibition photographs for 20 colonies, 200 prints of feature photographs to 20 colonies, 10,600 sets of coloured gravures to 11 colonies and 7,235 wall sheets to 21 colonies, Shuckburgh, op.cit., pp.183-4.

causes and the nature of the war but hardly inspirational matter.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, as Aneurin Bevan's caustic remark captured it, 'the impression is now universal that if the Germans do not manage to bomb us to death the Ministry of Information will bore us to death'.<sup>64</sup>

Three thousand photographs a week were sent to the colonies by the MOI and a special portrait poster of the King for colonial audiences was prepared. There was a Colonial Office-MOI dispute about the slogan to accompany it. The Colonial Section recommended, 'In Defence of Freedom and all that we hold dear, I call upon my Peoples to stand firm and United until Victory is won'. Sir Arthur Dawe in another one of his rants about the inappropriateness of the MOI's typically Anglo-Saxon clichéd phraseology for colonial audiences, noted that 'many colonial peoples will be tempted to say that they have not much freedom to defend'. Others in Africa might remember Abyssinia when Britain's 'zeal for freedom was not so markedly displayed'. There was much to be said for a little 'intellectual honesty', Dawe argued, as Britain was fighting for her existence and her interests and 'the talk by us of freedom is certainly widely regarded by people of non-British race as simply a piece of British humbug'. He appealed for the abandonment of the use of the word freedom and to end the conduct of propaganda on the assumption that colonial peoples thought the same as the British:

Not all peoples in other latitudes understand what is meant by this abstract conception: nor do they feel any particular impulse to fight for it. Again what is 'all that we hold dear'? Who are 'we'? A lot of things that we hold dear in this country are not held dear by people in the Colonies: and vice versa. What we want is not sloppy verbiage but something with an edge on it which strikes clearly and forcibly on the mind.<sup>65</sup>

The Colonial Office alternatives were hardly better, the

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<sup>63</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/3/file.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Ian McLaine, Ministry of Morale (London, 1979), p.41.

<sup>65</sup> PRO, CO323/1663/6, Harlow to Poynton, 21 November 1939; CO323/1663/5, Harlow to Poynton, 9 December 1939; minute by Dawe, 13 December 1939.



meaningless 'Hold fast to all that is just and of good report' and the 'Life is a great adventure, and everyone of you can be a pioneer, blazing, by thought and service, a trail to better things'. The latter recalled the early MOI poster designed for British audiences: 'Your courage, your cheerfulness, your resolution will bring us victory', with the patronising inference that 'sacrifices would be made by the many for the few'.<sup>66</sup> The Colonial Office's preferred slogan was adapted to 'everyone can be a pioneer, blazing, by thought and service, a trail to better things' even though John Calder thought it was a slogan which would 'defy translation into any African language'. The issue was finally resolved by a decision to have the words 'send him victorious' over a blank panel for the colonial Information Officers to fill in as they saw fit.<sup>67</sup>

The MOI as is well known came in for almost universal criticism about its propaganda, personnel and leadership. Not until the arrival of Brendan Bracken\* as Minister of Information in July 1941 with his inside knowledge of how the Press worked and support of the Prime Minister and Cyril Radcliffe as Director General in December 1941 with his 'incisive mind ... and firmness'<sup>68</sup> that the MOI was rehabilitated.<sup>69</sup> As far as the imperial propaganda effort was concerned this rehabilitation did not occur until even later. It was only in mid-1943 that imperial propaganda found a successful dual combination of inspirational leadership and a new mission. In the meantime the MOI was the object of derision and inter-departmental bickering.

In a short story written by Graham Greene in 1940, 'Men at Work', Greene satirised the problems of the MOI and its relationship with other government departments. He wrote a fictional account of a meeting of the 'Book

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<sup>66</sup> PRO, C0323/1663/5, Poynton to Harlow, 22 December 1939; McLaine, op.cit., p.31.

<sup>67</sup> PRO, C0323/1663/5, minute by Calder, 2 January 1940 and Sabine to Harlow, 10 January 1940.

<sup>68</sup> Balfour, op.cit., p.65.

<sup>69</sup> McLaine, op.cit., p.243.

Committee' attended by 'Lewis' of the Empire Division. A pamphlet on the British empire had been commissioned for distribution at public meetings. However, 'all sorts of tactless phrases' had been discovered by 'the experts',

India objected to a reference to Canadian dairy herds, and Australia objected to a phrase about Botany Bay. The Canadian authority was certain that mention of Wolfe would antagonize French-Canadians, and the New Zealand authority felt that undue emphasis had been laid on Australian fruit farms. Meanwhile the public meetings had all been held, so that there was no means of distributing the pamphlet. Somebody suggested that it might be sent to America for the New York World's Fair, but the American Division then demanded certain cuts in the references to the War of Independence, and by the time those had been made the World's Fair had closed.<sup>70</sup>

Greene's observations would have found a receptive ear in the Colonial Office which was dissatisfied with the MOI's direction of colonial propaganda. Later in the war Kenneth Grubb\*, Controller of the Overseas Division of the MOI, 1941-6 recognised that the 'handicaps of leadership' had been responsible for the 'low reputation' of the Empire Division in the first half of the war.<sup>71</sup>

Criticism was manifold. The Empire Division was criticised for duplicating the work of the regional specialists in the Colonial Office where the Colonial Section's specialists knew considerably less than the staff of the Colonial Office's Geographical Departments. The MOI's machinery was criticised for being too large given that it was not even responsible for providing news to the colonies. The MOI as a separate channel of communication

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<sup>70</sup> Graham Greene, 'Men at Work' in Twenty-One Short Stories, (London, 1977), pp.66-7.

<sup>71</sup> PRO, INF1/110, Grubb to Woodburn, 18 November 1944. The directors of the Empire Division prior to the transformation that the appointment of Gervas Huxley brought to the division were either frustrated in their task, like Harry Hodson, considered 'too young and inexperienced' to pull the Empire Division out of its difficulties in that field, although experienced in the ways of the Colonial Office in the case of Lord Dufferin, or completely overwhelmed by the task, resigning due to ill-health in the case of Edward Rawdon-Smith, PRO, INF1/111, minute by Radcliffe, 1 October 1941; PRO, INF1/110, office notice, 4 April 1943.



to the colonies was criticised for being a rival to Colonial Office responsibility over policy in the colonies. As George Seel, Colonial Office Liaison Officer working in the Colonial Section of the Empire Division of the MOI, noted:

propaganda, however "objective" in intention, cannot be conducted amongst the native populations in colonial dependencies without direct repercussions upon administration, and in the last resort the responsibility for publicity in such areas must rest with the Secretary of State [for the Colonies].<sup>72</sup>

Implicit in Colonial Office criticism was the charge that the MOI was staffed by amateurs and that anything which may impact on the African populations should be left to specialists, i.e. the Colonial Office.<sup>73</sup>

Seel also doubted the suitability of the kind of propaganda produced by the Colonial Section. He argued that the colonies only needed a limited amount of propaganda. What was required was first the local dissemination of reliable news and second, the kind of 'propaganda' which had been recommended by some of the colonial governments in response to the pre-war survey, the minimum dislocation of life in the colonies and the continuation of British colonial policy and the implementation of development and welfare plans. There

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<sup>72</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/11, report by Seel, No. 73, October 1939.

<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/11, minute by Seel, 2 October 1939. For example Seel's criticism of the head of the Colonial Section at the MOI, Vincent Harlow, 'No one can doubt Professor Harlow's enthusiasm and sincerity of purpose, but he conveys the impression that the war is to him the opportunity of conveying uplift on a large scale to colonial populations. His outlook is, as might be expected, academic and I imagine his direction will be a kind of university lecture series. He appears to be quite inexperienced in administration and this coupled with the provision of a "scratch" staff of assistants, has so far prevented the Section from setting down any coherent plan of working or any well-defined objective'. Seel was more impressed with H.S. Scott\*, responsible for the East African group who was a former Director of Education in the Transvaal and Kenya, who had registered for National Service and was 'somewhat non-plussed at finding himself in this heterogeneous company and by no means convinced of the necessity for his employment'.

should be, he argued,

concentration upon measures designed to maintain, and increase wherever possible, the economic prosperity of the Colonies, and to develop social services, as and when the funds make it possible, upon the lines which were in contemplation before the outbreak of the war.

Seel thought that anything more than this was superfluous and not worth the expenditure involved. Additional material like films and feature articles should only be used when 'really suitable material was available'; material like the MOI's 'A Day in the Life of an Air Raid Warden' would not in Seel's opinion have 'any substantial result in affecting African or Asiatic opinion'. The colonial governments were the best placed to judge the suitability of material for colonial audiences and the only machinery required was a small Public Relations Department within the Colonial Office itself.<sup>74</sup> It is clear that Seel's experience of liaising with the Colonial Section can account for his jaundiced view of the MOI's colonial propaganda effort and indeed it appears that the criticisms of the suitability of the kind of general propaganda produced by the MOI were justified. However there is also a sense that there was a general lack of sympathy with the object of not merely telling colonial audiences about the war, but explaining it to them.

The dissatisfaction with the Colonial Section led to the suggestion by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, to simplify the machinery radically by abolishing the Colonial Section of the Empire Division of the MOI and creating a Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office which would take over its functions and work in cooperation with the producer departments of the MOI.<sup>75</sup>

Harry Hodson, the director of the Empire Division at the MOI, was incensed at the suggestion to abolish the Colonial Section at the MOI. He objected on the grounds of

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<sup>74</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/11, report by Seel, No.73, October 1939.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, CO323/1660/11, MacDonald to Macmillan, 16 October 1939.



the need for economy. Duplication of work should be avoided because of the fact that propaganda did not 'stop at frontiers' and the importance of 'speaking to the whole world including our own people, with a single voice on Britain's war aims and the British war effort' was immense. He was irritated that the Colonial Office had not mentioned in the previous six months its intention to establish a Public Relations Department and in any case did not feel the Colonial Office was capable of conducting colonial propaganda itself. He dismissed the Colonial Office argument about the Secretary of State's 'responsibility':

to maintain, as Mr. MacDonald appears to maintain ... that because action under the authority of one Minister may affect the responsibilities of another, the latter should takeover the field of action from his colleague, would mean that all functions of state would be concentrated in one office.<sup>76</sup>

The solution was a compromise. Lord Macmillan\*, the Minister of Information, agreed to reorganise the Empire Publicity Division, but would retain a reduced Colonial Section by abolishing regional specialists and the post of Colonial Office Liaison Officer. He agreed to the principle that the Colonial Secretary was 'responsible for deciding what should be the general policy underlying and covering publicity measures which may be undertaken by individual Colonial Governments' and that the Colonial Office would be the sole channel of communication to the colonial empire.<sup>77</sup> Sir Arthur Dawe, erstwhile critic of the Colonial Section was delighted:

it is clear that Mr. Hodson and Professor Harlow are both in a very much chastened frame of mind and that the first rapture of being dressed in a little brief authority has worn off.<sup>78</sup>

The Colonial Office was not slow to realise that by winning the battle for control of propaganda, the Colonial Office was to be the sole channel of communication to the

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<sup>76</sup> PRO, INF1/28, Hodson to Macmillan, 19 October 1939.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/11, Macmillan to MacDonald, 27 October 1939.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, C0323/1660/11, minute by Dawe, 4 November 1939.

colonies would involve extra work and this added to the arguments in favour of creating a Public Relations Department for in order to fulfill this new function staff would be needed to carry it through. What was important to the Colonial Office however, was that the 'principle' of their control had been firmly established. In order to minimise work involved in overseeing what the MOI sent to the colonies, Vincent Harlow, head of the Colonial Section, would send only samples of what was sent to the colonies. For example, the Colonial Office did not think it necessary to vet every photograph sent to the colonies, except perhaps 'one that might give rise to the colour question, e.g. white German prisoners in charge of black troops or guards'. Even in that case it was felt that it would be up to the individual colonial government to decide the appropriateness of using such a photograph.<sup>79</sup>

Propaganda against the British empire continued to be a consistent theme of Nazi propaganda.<sup>80</sup> Nazi allegations about the dissatisfaction of the colonial peoples with British rule could be countered by publicising the unity of the empire's response to the war. For example, the desire of the 'natives' of Southern Rhodesia to assist the empire in its struggle against Nazism by voluntary and non-solicited contributions in money and crops. This had even more significance because the contributions originated from areas which had opposed European domination in the Matabele and Mashona rebellion 43 years ago. This loyalty to the King would be proof 'that natives had since come [to] appreciate [the] benefits of British rule and [were] determined to do all in [their] power [to] aid Britain in [the] war against aggression realising what would be their

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<sup>79</sup> PRO, CO323/1669/11, minute by Poynton, 10 November 1939.

<sup>80</sup> See further Willi A. Boelcke, The Secret Conferences of Dr. Goebbels, October 1939-March 1943, (London, 1967), p.61 and 68; Robert Herzstein, The War That Hitler Won, (London, 1979), p.325 and pp.344-9 for his analysis of the film Ohm Kruger which attacked Britain's imperial policy and the war in South Africa against the Boers, showing British cruelty and British concentration camps.



fate under Nazi rule'.<sup>81</sup> This colonial contribution to the empire's war effort was used throughout the war as evidence of contentment with the British imperial system, in spite of the contrary evidence of events in South East Asia in early 1942. Cooperation from other departments was secured to honour the colonial contributions; the Air Ministry ensured air squadrons were named after colonies which provided the cost, similarly the War Office named tanks and the Ministry of Food took charge of a fleet of mobile canteens which was purchased with colonial money and named were on active service throughout the blitz, the first of which were formally accepted by the Queen on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace at the end of 1940.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to these kind of positive measures to counter-act enemy propaganda, censorship was employed to prevent these kind of views from being aired in the first place. As was seen in chapter one, in the inter-war period colonial governments gained experienced in this area, particularly in the area of film censorship. During the war the colonies were instructed that 'subversive' newspapers like the communist party's Daily Worker and the fascist Action would not be given export licenses and that any copies found in the colonies should be confiscated by the colonial governments.<sup>83</sup> As far as other censorship issues were involved, the Colonial Office received complaints about the procedure adopted by the MOI. For example, Charles Watney, the London correspondent of the East African Standard, the Mombasa Times, and the Tanganyika Standard, complained that the MOI had refused to pass one of his 'London Letters' even though the information it contained had already appeared in the News

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<sup>81</sup> PRO, CO323/1665/2, circular despatch, 4 December 1939.

<sup>82</sup> Shuckburgh, op.cit., p.181.

<sup>83</sup> PRO, CO323/1793/2, circular despatch to all colonies, 15 May 1940.

Chronicle.<sup>84</sup> In the Colonial Office it was noted that Watney was an 'inveterate grumbler' and that in any case the Press and Censorship Bureau of the MOI did not censor from the point of view of probable effect in the colonies. Watney was told to refer back to the MOI. The MOI wrote to the Colonial Office explaining what had happened. The main problem was that there was no compulsory press censorship in wartime Britain:

Mr Watney has a peculiar nose for items in the British press which have not been submitted here for censorship and which if they had been submitted would never have been allowed to be published.

Details about troop movements, even if published once, could not be allowed to be 'confirmed by repetition'.<sup>85</sup>

Other empire journalists represented by the Empire Press Union also complained to the MOI that their work was being handicapped by what they saw as this 'double censorship'. Their reports were censored once in Britain by the MOI and then censored again by censorship machinery when their reports reached the colonies. Therefore the Colonial Office asked colonial governments 'to agree not to censor messages' which had been passed by the Press Censorship Bureau of the MOI.<sup>86</sup> Problems continued to arise because the London correspondents sent their editors details about the timings of air raid alerts and all clear signals as background information and 'it was too much to expect an editor to refrain from using its contents unless further censorship was applied'. Therefore the Colonial Office told the censors in the colonies to stop the

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<sup>84</sup> PRO, CO323/1793/1, Watney to MacDonald, 5 January 1940. The offending article which appeared in the News Chronicle stated, 'Large numbers of the two million men due to be called up in the next few months will be sent abroad for training. The places chosen include France, Africa and Palestine. This will not only relieve the billeting strain at home but will provide extra forces at many strategic points. Many skilled men will go straight to their trades on joining up. There is no question of using them in place of ordinary workmen in arms factories or workshops'.

<sup>85</sup> PRO, CO323/1793/1, minute by Poynton, 6 January 1940; Lyall to Sabine, 10 February 1940.

<sup>86</sup> PRO, CO323/1792/10, minute by Calder, 7 October 1940.



publication of times when the 'Alert' and 'All Clear' were sounded.<sup>87</sup>

In the early part of the war as far as colonial publicity was concerned a 'judicious balance' had to be held between 'the countering of apathy, amid which factious criticism flourishes, and the discouragement of undue martial ardour, which might prove embarrassing in view of the obstacles to the general use of colonial troops'.<sup>88</sup> But it was also questionable whether the mere issuing of war news, what little there was, and highlighting how evil the Nazis were was required as Mein Kampf had quickly become 'dead as mutton'.<sup>89</sup>

The beginning of 1940 saw attempts to achieve a more systematic and efficient distribution of material to the African colonies, to iron out early problems and to provide a greater variety to the kind of material produced. A major difficulty was the necessity for propaganda to speak with one 'voice' while trying to accommodate regional variations. In practice this, together with the need for economy, often meant that the original hope that material could be adapted for specific audiences was subordinated to the distribution of more general propaganda. As Hodson noted, the problem of producing propaganda for the British empire was that the people it was designed to appeal to varied widely from 'sophisticated pacifists in North America to warlike and even bloodthirsty African tribesmen'. One theme which aimed to address this difficulty was to emphasise the unity of the empire in the wartime struggle. This theme could acknowledge that while differences between the various communities existed they were united in the task of defeating the enemy. Arrangements were made to stress the theme of empire unity. For example, cinema vans were sent to Kenya; 3,200 pounds was allocated to posters portraying the strength of the

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<sup>87</sup> PRO, CO323/1792/10, minute by Pugh, 30 October 1940; circular despatch to all colonies, 2 November 1940.

<sup>88</sup> PRO, INF1/3, progress report, January-February 1940.

<sup>89</sup> PRO, INF1/163, Nicholson to MacGregor, 5 July 1940.

Empire; material such as 'Matters of the Moment' and 'the Empire at War' were sent to the colonies through the BBC's Empire Transcription Scheme.<sup>90</sup>

The BBC and broadcasting about the British Empire  
The BBC's Empire Service celebrated its seventh anniversary on the outbreak of war.<sup>91</sup> As we have seen 'reliable' news was seen as a major component of the wartime publicity effort in the colonial empire and the BBC in war as in peace would have an important role in this respect. In view of the practice of 'cross-listening' between the various services of the BBC it was vital that the BBC spoke the same 'truth' to all its audiences thereby maintaining its credibility as a source of reliable news. The MOI's News Division maxim 'to tell the truth, nothing but the truth and as near as possible the whole truth'<sup>92</sup> was translated in respect of BBC news broadcasts to mean that as far as possible adverse news would not be covered up. The war tested the BBC's own pre-war maxim of telling the truth 'and nothing but the truth, even if the truth is horrible' for while the BBC remained constitutionally independent of the government during the war it had agreed that it would act under government instructions as far as would be necessary in matters that concerned the national interest and the conduct of the war.<sup>93</sup>

The Empire Service was to play an important part during the war. First, it continued to provide a sense of unity within the empire by maintaining contact between

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<sup>90</sup> PRO, INF1/3, Progress Report, January - February 1940.

<sup>91</sup> On 21 January 1941 the Empire Service was incorporated into the General Overseas World Service. For details of the revised World Service schedule see: BBC Written Archives at Caversham Park (hereafter WAC), E2/452/file. The new organisation consisted of the General Overseas, North American, African, Pacific and Eastern Services. In 1944 the General Overseas Service incorporated the General Forces Programme.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in McLaine, op.cit., p.26.

<sup>93</sup> Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Volume III, the War of Words, (London, 1970), pp.89-91 and 77.



Britain and the rest of the empire. Second, it would continue to counter Axis radio propaganda which was heard in the empire. Third, it would serve the large number of men from the empire serving in the armed forces. Asa Briggs has argued that the Empire Division of the MOI 'exercised far less control over Empire broadcasts to Europe', but it will be seen that there was cooperation between the MOI and the BBC on the one hand and the Colonial Office and the BBC on the other hand throughout the war on specific campaigns and when problems arose over programming.<sup>94</sup> Right from the beginning of the war staff of the Colonial Office were told to cooperate as fully as possible with the BBC during the war by notifying the BBC of service officers on leave who could broadcast on colonial matters and by suggesting topical subjects for talks and commentaries.<sup>95</sup>

As the war progressed the BBC became increasingly committed to providing programming of a regional nature. This was all the more important during the war because proposals for the development of a large scale 'Empire Broadcasting Network' of local short-wave relay stations in the colonies had to be deferred. Instead the war witnessed the continuation of 'unplanned and uncoordinated growth' of broadcasting in the colonies.<sup>96</sup> In the pre-war period the development of local colonial broadcasting was recognised to be an expensive undertaking made even worse under wartime financial constraints. The BBC wanted to undertake a survey of broadcasting activity in the colonies and the machinery of consultation between the Colonial Office and the BBC was revived in the Colonial Office's Broadcasting Sub-Committee.<sup>97</sup> The BBC was keen that progress towards the establishment of an Empire Broadcasting Network should

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<sup>94</sup> Briggs, The War of Words..., p.491.

<sup>95</sup> PRO, CO878/26, office circular No. 223, 7 December 1939.

<sup>96</sup> ibid. p.494 and 496.

<sup>97</sup> WAC, E2/92/2, minute by Clark, 15 August 1940. The BBC was also encouraged by the enthusiastic approach to the subject shown by Sabine.

be considered during the war so that when peace-time conditions returned 'the voice of the British Empire as a working democratic association of nations should be clearly and insistently heard throughout the world'.<sup>98</sup> The BBC's Research Unit which provided information to the Overseas Divisions of the BBC to help in planning 'long-run propaganda' also cooperated with the MOI's Reference Division.<sup>99</sup>

The person most associated with BBC broadcasts to Africa during the war was the English and Afrikaans speaker the South African John Grenfell Williams, the African Programme Organiser and Deputy Director of Empire Services:

Grenfell Williams believed that his task was fourfold. First, he had to describe what was happening in the war as vividly as possible to people who knew little of the circumstances in which it was being waged. Second, he had to project the United Kingdom to the Colonies as faithfully as he could. Third, he had to ensure that the BBC made a contribution to the solution of colonial problems ... Fourth, he just had to be friendly.<sup>100</sup>

In 1943, under Grenfell Williams' guidance the BBC developed more specialised programmes with the inauguration of separate Forces programmes for troops in North and East Africa led to the special programme for East Africa.<sup>101</sup>

Part of the BBC's activities in empire broadcasting was the Empire Transcription Scheme which had been set up by the Joint Broadcasting Committee and the Empire Division of the MOI.<sup>102</sup> It was designed to supplement the BBC's Empire Service which was considered to be too limited and left colonial stations many hours to fill with their own

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<sup>98</sup> WAC, E2/360/1, Internal BBC Memorandum, 'Empire Broadcasting Network', 15 December 1941.

<sup>99</sup> WAC, E2/453, BBC memorandum, 'Research Unit (Overseas) - Organisation, 26 July 1941. The BBC Research Unit's contact person in the MOI was Miss Horsfall who advised on the Empire's war effort, Colonial Policy and social and political questions.

<sup>100</sup> Briggs, The War of Words ..., pp. 513-4.

<sup>101</sup> ibid., pp. 514-6.

<sup>102</sup> For details about the Transcription Service see further, ibid., pp. 185-6 and p.344.



programmes. The Empire Transcription Scheme produced scripts in London for broadcast by local stations in the colonies and supplied records of speeches and music. It was thought that the European communities could largely be 'ignored' either because their loyalty was taken for granted or because they were negligible in size. The appeal was to be 'entirely to native communities and non-British immigrants' in their own vernacular.<sup>103</sup> Kenneth Bradley\*, the Information Officer in Northern Rhodesia, writer and future Director of the Imperial Institute, complained however that greater cognisance of the audience BBC scripts were intended for had to be taken. Even within the same script, he argued, the language employed was in part too simple and in part too sophisticated for the African to understand. For example, a script by the novelist Elspeth Huxley on farming explained ploughing which was already a familiar process in Northern Rhodesia and casually mentioned clover and other things unknown in the colony. Similarly, a talk by an African on his ARP experiences was too sophisticated, and worse 'introduced the colour question', which Bradley was 'glad to say does not yet arise in the minds of most of our listeners'.<sup>104</sup> Although this seemed nit-picking it is hard to dispute that language needed to be simple if it were broadcasts were to appeal to more than a highly educated and minority audience and the subject matter needed to be something which Africans could relate to as part of their everyday lives, which was questionable in the case of the activities of an ARP warden.

Other complaints were that by the time items such as background newsletters reached the colonies they were out of date due to the slowness of the airmail service.<sup>105</sup> The East African Governors Conference in Nairobi even opposed

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<sup>103</sup> PRO, INF1/165, Joint Broadcasting Scheme in the colonies, undated.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, INF1/163, Bradley to Macgregor, BBC Liaison Officer, 26 July 1940.

<sup>105</sup> PRO, INF1/163, Wisdom, Tanganyika, to Macgregor, 16 July 1940.

the principle of broadcasting to Africans from London because 'unless those responsible are in constant touch with African listeners and can ascertain their reactions, broadcasts may produce results the reverse of those intended'. Proposals for Nairobi to improve local broadcasting would be considered at a regional conference of East African information officers later in 1941.<sup>106</sup> Here perhaps we have a case of resentment at being told what was suitable for their own peoples. Just as the Colonial Office thought it knew the colonies better than the Colonial Section of the MOI, the colonial governments thought they knew better than London.

The BBC colonial liaison officer to the Empire Transcription Scheme, J.C.S. MacGregor, was equally aware of the potential for creating problems in the colonies. In particular, care would have to be taken in publicity about the treatment of Africans fighting under British command. MacGregor noted that there was concern about an 'unhappy lingering memory in East Africa of the fate of Africans who were used upon the lines of communication in the last war'. The Colonial Office, however assured MacGregor that official instructions had already been sent to the colonies the previous summer that the term 'carrier corps' should not be used in broadcasts. The Colonial Office doubted that unhappy memories existed on a wide scale, probably only in the minds of a 'few "old timers"'.<sup>107</sup>

The contents of Empire Transcription Scheme scripts would have to be carefully monitored to avoid embarrassment through ignorance of local conditions and developments. For example, in one script in Fisher's series 'London Letter' he had, much to the irritation of the Colonial Office, implied that Nigeria was well on the road to Dominion status. In another on the subject of 'Freedom', Fisher had suggested, rather unfortunately, that 'a wise man accepts these limits to his personal freedom as the price he has to pay for greater freedom'. Furthermore,

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<sup>106</sup> PRO, INF1/163, EAGC to Colonial Office, 23 March 1941.

<sup>107</sup> PRO, INF1/163, MacGregor to Nicholson, 4 July 1940; Nicholson to MacGregor, 5 July 1940.



Fisher argued:

Britain keeps her Empire today because she realises the tremendous strength of the desire in every community to control its own destinies as far as possible, she keeps her Empire because in every part of it wise men realise that only in cooperation with a great Empire is there real freedom for the individual to be found. Freedom? Rather safety in these days when the Wolf is abroad.

MacGregor objected to the central argument that 'freedom increases with the size of the unit' which could draw the conclusion that as the 51% of the world was under Nazi rule 'the rest of us ought to join in for the sake of greater freedom'. Any talk of giving 'freedom' to the colonies was especially dangerous at this time 'when Africa is threatened' and Britain 'ought not to boast of nailing our columns to so wobbly a mast'. Instead Britain should talk about what had been achieved and tell the world that 'democracy is not only nicer but can be effective!'<sup>108</sup>

Subjects to be included in the revamped Empire Transcription Scheme were: 'What Britain is Fighting For', a series on the empire with items such as how East Africa became British i.e. by the abolition of slavery; 'What Britain is Fighting Against' covering life under Nazi rule, Gestapo methods, race theory; 'Leaders of Britain', focussing on figures like Halifax, Eden, Chamberlain and Churchill; 'Germany and the colonies', statements from chiefs in Tanganyika remembering life under German rule; 'the Aims of British colonial policy' with greater stress on actual examples like the development of medical, education and agricultural services rather than general statements of policy; 'Tales by Natives' would be written entirely by natives consisting of personal talks 'describing their own country, its outlook, industries and daily life', flattering the colony from where the speaker came from, creating an impression of 'the size and diversity of the Colonial Empire'; and topical talks on the war which, it was felt, would be 'immensely popular' with

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<sup>108</sup> PRO, INF1/163, MacGregor to Wrong, 12 December 1940; Fisher's script, undated; MacGregor to Wrong 4 May 1941. It was decided that Fisher's services would not be required in the future.

the 'natives' who 'received little news beyond the BBC bulletins'.<sup>109</sup>

The Empire Service tried to provide a balance between 'news' and talks on the one hand and entertainment on the other hand. Talks featured broadcasters already well known to Home Service audiences. For example, the former editor of the Times, Wickham Steed presented 'World Affairs' while J.B. Priestley, well known for his 'Postscripts' on the Home Service was a regular presenter of 'Britain Speaks'. The News Chronicle journalist, Vernon Bartlett, also presented 'Britain Speaks' and 'Questions of the Hour'. Herbert Marshall, the BBC's pre-war sports commentator and later the correspondent of 'War Report' on the D-Day landings, presented 'London Log'. Other talks series designed to maintain contact between Britain and the empire included 'Background to the News', 'Matters of the Moment', 'In England Now', 'Cards on the Table' and 'News From Home'. In the entertainment field, in addition to concerts by the BBC's Empire Orchestra, the Empire Service broadcast popular Home Service programmes like 'In Town Tonight', 'ITMA' and the 'soap', 'Frontline Family', as well as a special programme for Africa 'Song Time in the Laager'.

Listeners in the empire were encouraged to write to the BBC with their comments on Empire Service programmes which were printed in the Empire Service's magazine equivalent of the Radio Times, London Calling. A listener in Northern Rhodesia was critical of the Empire Service's entertainment programmes:

I honestly think that if you took an all-round census of opinion in Southern Africa you would find that people just didn't bother to listen, as the musical items are so utterly dreadful. I feel that you imagine us to be a small group of highbrows who like any amount of discord so long as there is no suspicion of a melody. Tonight I have been listening to a programme of madrigals and they simply resembled a cats' concert.<sup>110</sup>

A listener in Southern Rhodesia, however, was full of

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<sup>109</sup> PRO, INF1/165, Joint Broadcasting Committee, 'Broadcasting in the Colonies', undated.

<sup>110</sup> London Calling, 11 May 1940.



praise for the Empire Service and its part in uniting the people of the empire with Britain in difficult wartime conditions, highlighting both the premium placed on receiving news from home and confirmation of the BBC's reputation for reliable news:

Special thanks for the Sunday afternoon services; length of service and style are to our way of thinking absolutely right. Talks, talks, talks are what we clamour for; it is so interesting to get first hand knowledge of all sorts of subjects pertaining to world affairs today - Richard Dimbleby and naval experts keep us right on the spot. The Male Choir, too is a joy; they never seem to get coughs or colds. Finally I'd like to say that the BBC means more to us now even than in peacetime; it is our one sure, truthful link with home, and one relies on you whether it be for relaxation, education, church services or a sense of companionship with Home, and not leaving out the ever important news it is impossible to measure the importance of the BBC in daily life.<sup>111</sup>

In a similar vein, a listener from Tanganyika praised the news on the Empire Service, vindicating the emphasis placed on the need for a reliable news service as the best means of propaganda, at least with European audiences:

We have just heard the news. It included a record of an air-raid, complete with noises off. We called the House Boys to listen; their mouths hung open, their eyes popped with excitement, and devout Mohammedan prayers issued at intervals in grunts. I write out the news bulletin daily and it goes the rounds. Oh, thank Heaven for the wireless. What people overseas went through in the last war I cannot think.<sup>112</sup>

The BBC monitored audience reactions in Africa based on information it received from its 'observer scheme', periodic questionnaires, general correspondence, Press references and official and commercial reports. These reports helped the BBC to improve its service overseas and tended to reinforce the opinions of the correspondents whose letters were published in London Calling: that the BBC could be relied upon for truth about the war. For example, in an African Service Audience Reaction Report a major criticism was that there was 'overmuch talk' and 'too little music and entertainment'. A listener in Southern

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<sup>111</sup> ibid.

<sup>112</sup> London Calling, 5-11 January 1941.

Rhodesia complained about 'a most regrettable dearth of good music, orchestral, vocal or chamber music at convenient times. Few people listen after the 8 o'clock news'. A listener in Nyasaland commented, 'you broadcast far too many talks. Some are extremely interesting, but a lot of them are not'. There was, however, praise for news presentation. As a listener in Southern Rhodesia wrote, 'the whole of my circle of friends is completely satisfied with the presentation of the B.B.C. It is always regarded as being reliable and truthful. A little late sometimes, but none the less if we get it from the B.B.C. we believe it is true'.<sup>113</sup>

The Empire Service had always used the Royal Family as a symbol of unity of empire, and this proved to be even more important during the war when the people of the empire felt distanced from events in Europe.<sup>114</sup> Empire unity, the favoured theme of the Empire Division of the MOI was employed by the Queen when she broadcast to the women of the empire on Armistice Day 1939. In this morale-boosting broadcast the Queen paid tribute to the war effort, big or small, of the women of the empire and presented the war as a war of sacrifice of all the people:

... The call has come and from my heart I thank you, the women of our great Empire, for the way you have answered it. The tasks that you have undertaken, whether at home or in distant lands cover every field of National Service, and I should like to pay my tribute to all of you who are giving such splendid and unselfish help in this time of trouble ...<sup>115</sup>

The King's Christmas Day broadcast in 1939 echoed the unity theme and paid tribute to the spontaneous contributions made by the men and women of the 'far-flung Empire', the 'family of nations' which is prepared to sacrifice in a 'spirit of freedom',

Such is the spirit of the Empire, the great Dominions,

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<sup>113</sup> WAC, E171/2, BBC Empire Service Intelligence Memorandum, 'African Service Audience Reaction Report', 16 March 1942.

<sup>114</sup> C.f. MacKenzie, 'In Touch with the Infinite...', passim.

<sup>115</sup> London Calling, 18 November 1939.



of India, of every Colony, large or small. From all alike have come offers of help, for which the mother country can never be sufficiently grateful. Such unity in aim and in effort has never been seen in the world before.<sup>116</sup>

The King's Empire Day broadcast in 1940 warned against the war aims of the enemy which sought the 'complete and final' overthrow of the empire and 'everything for which it stands'. Moreover,

There is a word which our enemies use against us-imperialism. By it they mean the spirit of domination and the lust of conquest. We free peoples of the Empire cast that word back in their teeth. It is they who have evil aspirations. Our one object has always been peace; peace in which our institutions may be developed, the condition of our peoples improved, and the problems of government solved in a spirit of goodwill.<sup>117</sup>

At home in the early stages of the war the BBC's coverage of the British empire was largely limited to programmes about the contributions made by the empire to the war effort. Programmes on empire subjects were never a high priority on the Home Service where they would have to compete with more important war news, entertainment for morale-boosting or campaigns like those of the Ministry of Food. Therefore empire programmes were limited and concentrated initially on the theme of unity. For example, a half hour programme on the Home Service on 6 October 1939 before the main news at nine o'clock, 'The Empire Answers', devised and produced by Laurence Gilliam and A.L. Lloyd was a 'dramatic chronicle of the entry of the nations of the Commonwealth into the war' which portrayed how the challenge of the war came and the Empire's answer to that challenge.<sup>118</sup> The BBC produced a special series, 'Dominion Commentary', to remind the British audiences again of the contribution made by the empire to the war effort. The broadcast of 2 December had an African flavour with a talk

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<sup>116</sup> London Calling, 6 January 1940.

<sup>117</sup> London Calling, 13 July 1940.

<sup>118</sup> Radio Times, 1-7 October, 1939.

by Morris Broughton on South Africa.<sup>119</sup> The programming for Christmas Day 1939 included an afternoon programme, 'The Empire's Greetings', which showed how the 'great British family will once again be reunited by radio' comprising Christmas with the Forces, Christmas in the British Isles and Christmas in the Commonwealth overseas, with messages from Newfoundland, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the Colonial Empire (for 1939 represented by a Malayan Naval Rating serving in Singapore), India and South Africa.<sup>120</sup>

In the entertainment sphere, as opposed to 'morale-boosting' programming, the empire was represented by occasional plays and musical programmes. For example, a play written by Val Gielgud, 'Africa Flight', was broadcast on 4 January 1940 and Roger MacDougall and Allan MacKinnon's 'King of the Kongo' was broadcast on 28 May 1939, both with African backgrounds. 'The Empire Sings' on 18 February 1940 was a 'pot pourri' of music from all parts of the empire and on 14 August 1940 'Here We Come, Britain!' featured camp concerts given by empire troops. Again on 19 September 1939 'Empire Review' provided a 'romantic review of the British Empire in music, song and story' presented by Mike Meehan known to listeners as the presenter of 'In Town Tonight'.<sup>121</sup>

During 1940 as part of the effort in the wake of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to publicise more of what the British were doing for the empire the BBC included talks on larger colonial issues as well as programmes on the contribution of the empire to Britain's war effort. For example, in the series which followed the nine o'clock news, 'Tonight's Talk', of 28 July, the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the High Commissioner for the Malay States, Sir Shenton Thomas, gave a talk on 'How the Colonies Go To It'. On 14 August Sir Geoffrey Northcote\*,

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<sup>119</sup> Radio Times, 26 November - 2 December 1939.

<sup>120</sup> Radio Times, 24-30 December 1939.

<sup>121</sup> Radio Times, 31 December 1939 - 6 January 1940; 26 May - 1 June 1940; 18-24 February 1940; 11-17 August 1940; 15-21 September 1940.



the then Governor of Hong Kong and future Principal Information Officer in East Africa, gave a talk on 'Our Aims in Colonial Government'. The Minister of Information and regular government broadcaster, Duff Cooper\*, gave 'Children's Hour' special talk to the children of Britain and the empire as did Princess Elizabeth on 13 October. Harry Hodson, Director of the MOI's Empire Division led a discussion in the series 'Taking Stock' on the future of the British Commonwealth which discussed the part played by the self-governing dominions and dependencies during the war and raised issues, albeit in general terms, of the possible future of the Commonwealth as a nucleus for collective security in the future and whether there were any lessons to be learnt from the experience of the empire fighting together during the war which could help to solve post-war administrative problems. The Secretary of State for the Colonies and Chairman of the British Council, Lord Lloyd\*, gave the first talk by a Secretary of State on the Home Service during the war on 'The Colonial Empire and the War' in the series 'Tonight's Talk' on 15 October and repeated on 7 December.<sup>122</sup> A feature programme on the life of David Livingstone and a play, 'Builders of Empire', about the life of Cecil Rhodes were broadcast in December.<sup>123</sup> Again the Christmas day broadcasts by the BBC were seen as an opportunity to promote the idea of empire unity with the programme 'Christmas Under Fire' calling the empire.<sup>124</sup>

In 1941 there appears to have been a dropping off in programmes about the empire. Empire programmes were confined to a series 'Palm and Pine', celebrations for Empire Day 24 May and a tribute to the contribution of the troops of the empire in the defeat of the Italian armies in East Africa. In 'Palm and Pine' men from the Dominions and the Colonies spoke about their trades and lives before they

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<sup>122</sup> Radio Times, 28 July - 3 August 1940; 11-17 August 1940; 1-7 September 1940; 13-19 October 1940; 1-7 December 1940.

<sup>123</sup> Radio Times, 8-14 December 1940; 15-21 December 1940.

<sup>124</sup> Radio Times, 22-28 December 1940.

left their homes to fight in the war. For Empire Day there were two major programmes. The Empire Day concert included Dyson's song of unison, 'Motherland', setting William Watson's 1892 poem 'England and her Colonies' to music which featured the lines:

Children of Britain's island breed,  
To whom the Mother in her need,  
Perchance may one day call.

An hour long programme, 'Brothers in Arms', was the story of the empire at war from May 1940 to May 1941. On 8 September the collapse of the Italian empire in Africa was celebrated in a programme 'End of an Empire' which paid tribute to the joint efforts made by British, Imperial, Free French and Belgian forces fighting in the East African campaign.<sup>125</sup>

#### Colonial Propaganda and War Aims

The picture of the British empire portrayed by the BBC Home Service like that of colonial propaganda in general in the first two years of the war was fairly limited to programmes about the colonial war effort and of a win the war type of morale-boosting. That the theme of imperial unity was the only fare is not entirely surprising given Winston Churchill's attitude to the discussion of war aims.

A central problem confronting all British propagandists was the ban Churchill had placed on the public discussion of war aims and reconstruction in any other than general terms. As Churchill himself had expressed in the House of Commons on his first day as Prime Minister, 13 May 1940:

You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror, victory, however long and hard the road might be; for without victory there is no survival.<sup>126</sup>

In the dark days of 1940 following the fall of France and the Battle of Britain this was justifiable as the very survival of Britain let alone the British empire, was in

<sup>125</sup> Radio Times, 18-24 May 1941; 7-13 September 1941.

<sup>126</sup> Peter Hennessy, Never Again, Britain 1945-51, (London, 1992), p.25.



doubt. MOI propagandists, however, were alive to the problems this reluctance to discuss war aims, particularly as far as the British empire was concerned. Hodson expressed doubts about the value of continuing to portray the war as a struggle against 'evil things',

If this war is prosecuted as a war against evil things rather than Germany, we shall be reminded where charity begins. Though we can boast freedom of the person, of speech and faith, throughout the Empire, economic freedom is admittedly relative and incomplete. There is no burking the fact that large bodies of opinion in the overseas Empire are suspicious of class motives in British policy and for this reason it is most necessary that for the purposes of Empire propaganda our expression of war aims should be linked with an avowal of faith in a better world that we can build when the war is won.<sup>127</sup>

This continual emphasis on what the British empire was fighting against would naturally lead on to questions about what the British empire was fighting for.

Problems continued because what the propagandists considered would make 'good' propaganda they were not allowed to publicise. Many within the MOI, including the Minister of Information himself, Duff Cooper, and other figures like the deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee\*, and the Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, Arthur Greenwood\*, all favoured the broadcast of British war aims, not least because it was considered to be good propaganda in itself to discuss matters in wartime which would not be tolerated in totalitarian regimes. Moreover as Greenwood pointed out to Cooper, it would be useful to prepare British public opinion 'as to some of the immensely difficult problems we shall have to deal, and in setting out the positive elements in our own working Democracy - by way of counter to the Nazi New Order'. Subjects Greenwood thought could be properly discussed included nationality, control of armaments, the colonies, unemployment, education and social services.<sup>128</sup> One BBC official also added that broadcasts on these subjects,

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<sup>127</sup> PRO, INF1/165, Hodson, 'Propaganda in the Empire', undated.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, INF1/177, Greenwood to Cooper, 19 March 1941.

which he called 'the Brave New World' talks, would have the advantage of providing a 'safety valve' and that reaction to them would enable Ministers to have clues to the way the public was thinking about matters 'on which Government policy may still be in the making'.<sup>129</sup> As far as British propaganda towards the United States was concerned, there would be the further advantage of discussing British plans for the future of the empire because,

an argument constantly used by the more moderate section of the isolationists is that the United States is preparing to enter the war on behalf of an Empire whose objects apart from self-preservation are only defined in the vaguest manner.<sup>130</sup>

Opposition to the broadcast of peace aims was vociferously articulated by Churchill. As Harold Nicolson, Parliamentary Private Secretary at the MOI, explained to Duff Cooper the problem was that any discussion of war aims would either be 'colourless or controversial'. It would be 'controversial' because any discussion of a new world order could not avoid 'a leftish tendency', and would be 'colourless' because as no pacifists, communists or fascists would be permitted to broadcast there would not be an open forum. It would also not be fair to the BBC, argued Nicolson, to expose it to a possible 'tempest' without first obtaining Cabinet approval.<sup>131</sup> Such broadcasts may have had a detrimental effect on American opinion, for if a series were seemingly innocuously titled 'Where are we going?' the answer would probably be 'still further towards Socialism'.<sup>132</sup> Therefore while the empire propagandists were not able to directly publicise detailed

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<sup>129</sup> PRO, INF1/177, Ryan to Nicholson, 20 March 1941.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, INF1/177, Charles Webster, Royal Institute of International Affairs to Cooper, 24 June 1941.

<sup>131</sup> PRO, INF1/177, Nicolson to Cooper, 15 January 1941; Nicolson to Ryan 21 March 1941.

<sup>132</sup> PRO, INF1/177, Maconachie (BBC) to Nicolson 16 March 1941. A BBC series later that year 'Making Plans' raised some of the issues the BBC had wanted to broadcast about but these were domestic subjects, not the future of Britain's foreign or colonial policies. See further, Briggs, The War of Words ..., pp.322-3.



British war aims in relation to the empire the Empire Transcription Service was given a directive to discuss the war aims theme in terms of Britain's record of supporting the causes of small nations; fighting for a better world with social progress on the ruins of Nazi aggression; and the meaning of the British Empire.<sup>133</sup>

Despite the absence of specific war aims for the empire in Africa, there was one area in which the British government could show its commitment to the colonial empire and the kind of empire it aimed at creating for the future. This was accomplished by the passage of the new Colonial Development and Welfare legislation in February 1940 which earmarked 55 million pounds over ten years for projects in the colonies from the British exchequer. This legislation was the result of a long battle with the Treasury to change their philosophy from seeing the colonies as merely contributing to imperial coffers to a new responsibility to develop the colonies for mutual benefit and in the interests of colonial welfare. As was seen in chapter one the new Act would, it was thought, be good propaganda and help divert attention away from the failure to publish the Report of the West Indies Royal Commission. In the absence of formal war aims for the British empire its timing was extremely opportune.

The Colonial Office judged the reception of the Act as a success, especially by the conservative press. The Manchester Guardian, previously an object of Colonial Office suspicion that the inter-war policy of the paper had been to publish 'any information concerning the Colonies which may suggest exploitation'<sup>134</sup> greeted it 'with enthusiasm'.<sup>135</sup> The Times, under the editorship of the former Round Table editor, Geoffrey Dawson 'a true imperialist who had worked under Chamberlain at the Colonial Office and with Milner in South Africa' thought

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<sup>133</sup> PRO, INF1/165, Themes for the Empire transcription Service, Hodson, 14 May 1941.

<sup>134</sup> August, op.cit., p.93.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, C0875/12/22/file.

that Britain could 'feel proud of the Imperial spirit as one of the major forces working even in the stress of war, for the liberation and ordered progress of mankind'.<sup>136</sup> In the absence of specific war aims, the Manchester Guardian embraced it as a declaration of the kind of world for which Britain was fighting for, 'the resetting, for that is what it amounts to, of our attitude towards the colonies is in itself an affirmation of our war aims'. The paper, East Africa, echoing Joseph Chamberlainesque images of constructive imperialism and the development of undeveloped great estates, likewise hailed the new act as:

the definition in practical terms of that modern Imperialism of which the race has every reason to be proud... Never was a sounder blow struck at the old gibe that the Colonial Office tended to regard the Colonies as territories to be administered instead of estates to be developed.<sup>137</sup>

The Manchester Guardian went even further by warning that Britain should take notice of the growth in expectations aroused by the war and encouraged by the 1940 Act:

There runs through the comments of the African papers on the war a spirit which it is well to take notice. The hatred of the Nazis and their racial fanaticism is combined with a general expectation that British rule is going to be greatly improved ... We have to discover for Africa and the rest of the dependent Empire, the kind of conscience that gave a start to the modern social services in Britain with the great liberal victory in 1906.<sup>138</sup>

This was not, however, merely a one-sided relationship. The empire's war effort was continually publicised. The MOI produced a survey of the first year's mobilisation of the Colonial empire's energies in September 1940 in the series 'Matters of Fact'. It was important to show the British people that the colonies, far from being a drain on the British war effort, made a substantial contribution of their own. For example, it was explained that Africa bore the majority of the cost for its own defence, as it had done in 1939, while the British

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<sup>136</sup> The Times, 21 February 1940.

<sup>137</sup> East Africa, 29 February 1940.

<sup>138</sup> The Manchester Guardian, 14 December 1940.



government paid only 25%. The individual colony's military efforts were detailed including the flying school at Nakum, Kenya, the Volunteer Reserve Force in Uganda, the Tanganyika Naval Volunteer force, Northern Rhodesia's African Motor Driving School and Zanzibar's Field Ambulance Company. The colonies also contributed economically. An East African Economic Council was established mirroring similar government intervention at home. Mine workers in Northern Rhodesia who in spite of their desire to join the forces had been persuaded to remain and work in the vital war industry produced copper, lead and zinc. This survey also detailed the monetary contributions of the individual colonies Uganda and Tanganyika had both contributed 100,000 pounds, Northern Rhodesia 200,000 pounds in general and 38,000 pounds specifically for aircraft, Nyasaland 20,000 pounds in general and 32,850 pounds for aircraft and Zanzibar sent 20,000 pounds for two fighter aircraft the 'Zanzibar' and the 'Pemba'.<sup>139</sup>

Although there was a brief mention of the floating of the East African war loan through the issue of war bonds and the establishment of the East African War Supplies Board in the press<sup>140</sup> the Colonial Office was disappointed that the press had not taken up the story of colonial war contributions. Apart from The Times few papers seemed to think that this story merited much editorial space.<sup>141</sup> The Times noted in a summary of the colonial war effort that

perhaps the contributions from the African colonies are as remarkable as any, for they are made by rulers and races who are considered to be among the more backward of mankind, and yet they show the same spontaneity and true understanding of the issues involved as do the more Europeanised communities of the Asiatic and American continents.<sup>142</sup>

Two months later it summarised the wartime

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<sup>139</sup> PRO, CO875/12/17, 'Matters of Fact', 6 September 1940.

<sup>140</sup> For example The Times, 5 September 1940 and 28 November 1940; the Daily Telegraph, 30 October 1940.

<sup>141</sup> PRO, CO875/12/20, note on publicity for war contributions, 6 November 1941.

<sup>142</sup> The Times, 13 January 1940.

relationship between the colonies and the mother country, with reference to MacDonald's policy statement:

The Crown Colonies have rallied to the general cause of the alliance against Hitlerism with a unanimous loyalty to the governing Power which is the more gratifying because few of them have known much prosperity in the past troubled decade ... Although in some cases the enlarged demand from the Old World has stimulated production, the general effect on colonial economies is necessarily adverse ... It was unavoidable also that the Government in Whitehall should temporarily tighten its hold upon the reins of administration. The more opportune therefore was Mr. MacDonald's recent statement of colonial policy, in which he both offered early help to colonial finance and defined afresh the firm intention to lead the colonies after the war steadily towards self-government.<sup>143</sup>

In the English and settler paper, the East Africa and Rhodesia, the desire to make a full contribution to the Empire war effort was made apparent, but in terms of their own political agenda and different to the desired Colonial Office line. Responsible government free from the constraints and direction of London but also without black African participation, was 'superior' to that of colonial government:

British Africa realises that it stands high on the list of priorities of Hitler's aims, and it burns to engage in its own defence, for which it can properly supply inexhaustible numbers of excellent African troops and first class white leadership. The creation of great African armies seems to be a foregone conclusion ... Governments in East, Central and West Africa ... have in recent weeks called, and called confidently, for further contributions in manpower and in money. This was not regimentation from the top downwards as in totalitarian countries, but the expression of acknowledged spokesmen for their people uttering the common wish and will - in no single case in advance of public opinion, but in every case after it had been impatiently voiced by other public men impelled by the apprehension that their government was too patient, too cautious about imposing new sacrifices. As in almost all democratic states in recent years, there has been in the Rhodesias and East Africa a marked disposition to look to the public purse for succour in difficulties, now in these days of peril has come the awakening, and there is an

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<sup>143</sup> The Times, 6 April 1940.



ardent and universal anxiety to give, not to get.<sup>144</sup>

The point was made explicitly a few weeks later in the same paper:

By comparison the contribution of the East African territories to the North has been dilatory and measured - not, it must be insisted, because they are or were less ready to do all that lay in their power but because not being self-governing, they have been impelled to put a rein upon their enthusiasm and to travel at the leisurely pace pursued by Whitehall.<sup>145</sup>

The settler paper, the East African Standard, based in Nairobi also posed a similar potential problem for the propagandists and used its editorial column to complain about the Information Office and its lack of activity in the area of news provision (representing, perhaps, the 'leisurely pace' of Whitehall in the person of the colonial government's Information Officer). The Information Officer in Nairobi, Mervyn Hill was thought to be doing his best. For example, he contributed a weekly commentary to the paper under the pseudonym 'Signifier'. Hill wanted a Press Officer to be appointed on the grounds that Kenya had a war front of its own, that news received was often out of date and that papers like the East African Standard had to compete for MOI material which was often broadcast over the radio first.<sup>146</sup>

Edmett, seconded from the Colonial Service in the Gold Coast, where he would have had no first hand experience of administration against a background of the 'settler' problem working with Noel Sabine on publicity in the Colonial Office, thought there was little point in pandering to settler interests as represented in the East African Standard. Edmett expressed the progressive view that, as long as the African had no responsibility for any of the government in Kenya, the African would be little interested in what Kenya did as part of her war effort. He

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<sup>144</sup> PRO, CO875/12/20, East Africa and Rhodesia, 25 July 1940.

<sup>145</sup> PRO, CO875/12/20, East Africa and Rhodesia, 12 September 1940.

<sup>146</sup> PRO, CO875/6/16, Hill to Colonial Office, 11 February 1941.

thought that an Information Officer could not redress the balance and regretted that the Information Officer seemed to have become the 'handmaiden' of the GOC in Nairobi. As Edmett consistently argued<sup>147</sup> he wanted to look beyond the short term necessities of the war and recommended the establishment of the post of Public Relations Officer 'with a definite policy of associating black and white' which could obtain public backing by 'looking forward to the new millennium'.<sup>148</sup>

David Watherston of the East African Department of the Colonial Office, formerly of the Malayan Civil Service and subsequently Chief Secretary to the Federation of Malaya, 1952-7 did not agree. He thought that the basis of the East African Standard's attacks on the Kenyan Information Officer was the desire for the IO to appeal to the 'idle' African, to get him 'out of the reserve and work for the European farmers' benefit'.<sup>149</sup> As the chief secretary to the government of Kenya wrote, what was needed was the sending of 'rapid directives' and that in future much of long term material produced should be done locally.<sup>150</sup>

Following the success of the publicity for the Colonial Development and Welfare Act both the Colonial Office and the MOI made plans for an empire publicity campaign which would be aimed at 'stirring pride in our own people in Imperial achievements, as well as defending ourselves against attacks abroad'.<sup>151</sup> At home Noel Sabine the soon to be appointed Public Relations Officer suggested that the main points of British colonial policy of 'trusteeship, the gradual education towards self-government, must constantly be brought home, and the process of the application of this policy must be made

<sup>147</sup> C.f. chapter one.

<sup>148</sup> PRO, CO875/6/16, minute by Edmett, 10 October 1941.

<sup>149</sup> PRO, CO875/6/16, minute by Watherston 4 January 1942.

<sup>150</sup> PRO, CO875/6/16, Gurney to Colonial Office, 16 September 1941.

<sup>151</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, Reith to MacDonald, 26 March 1940.



dramatic and real'. In order to capture the imagination of the British population, argued Sabine, something more than the usual MOI imperial propaganda fare would be needed: 'the object before us must be to bring the Colonial Empire to everyone's notice by the really popular media', radio plays rather than radio talks and 'first class, dramatic and interesting films'.<sup>152</sup> This proposal for a new initiative in colonial propaganda, ambitious and beyond the resources of the Colonial Office and the MOI at this time. The war situation in Europe was so grave that it would have been hard to imagine that the projection of the British empire would have been a major priority in wartime propaganda at this point. However, Sabine's comments are noteworthy in that they point to a central problem for the colonial propagandists, to get the British public to 'think' empire a big splash was necessary for while pamphlets, radio talks and leader articles in the broadsheets had their place this was pandering to an audience whose interest in colonial affairs already existed.

The fall of France in June 1940 changed the context within which these on-going plans for an empire publicity campaign was discussed. Now that the British empire stood alone the empire was arguably the only strength the British could draw on. There was an even greater need to show the contributions of the empire to the war effort and bring comfort to the British people that they were not alone. Therefore the MOI decided to intensify the empire campaign 'more especially by means of a press and poster advertising campaign'<sup>153</sup> in addition to existing measures in leaflets, broadcasts and lectures. The campaign was kicked off by a press conference given by the Minister of Information, Duff Cooper:

the first purpose of the campaign is to drive home the fact that Great Britain does not stand in this struggle alone, but as a partner in a world-wide and immensely powerful family of nations. The British

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<sup>152</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, note by Sabine, undated.

<sup>153</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/12, Hodson to Sabine, 7 August 1940.

Commonwealth of nations has vast reserves of strength, both of man power, of industrial equipment and of raw materials and food stuffs. After a year of steadily growing war effort, these reserves have been mobilised to the point at which they must soon become a vital factor in winning the war ... the aim of the Empire campaign of the Ministry of Information is to encourage people to look not only at the present strength of the British Commonwealth, but also at its immense capabilities for the future welfare of the human race.<sup>154</sup>

While this campaign would not be linked to war aims per se, the campaign would have the advantage of helping 'to prepare the public for the emergence of war aims' at a later date by stressing that 'the strength of the Imperial war effort was derived from its freedom of choice'. Lord Davidson, head of the General Production Division at the MOI, pointed out that criticism would be forthcoming from those who had long since argued that the 'Imperial idea' itself was 'a bad thing' and that such a campaign would also be useful in clearing away 'the misconception in the public mind about the status of the Dominions and Colonies'.<sup>155</sup>

In spite of the laudable intentions behind the campaign the advertisement part of it was not a success. The brainchild of Harry Hodson, the 'Empire Crusade' adverts taken out in the Press over a ten week period variously depicted the empire as 'a family of free nations...men and women of every colour are working out their own destiny...in this war they are fighting shoulder to shoulder of their own free will' and imparting a dynamic faith in its strength:

The Greatest Crusade.

We, who are members of the British Commonwealth, hold in our hands the future of the world.

By fostering the spirit of liberty we are building self-reliant nations of free men.

We are the builders at grips with the destroyers. We stand for healthy unhampered growth, fighting the disease of tyranny ...

Tyranny is the oldest disease of the human race.

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<sup>154</sup> PRO, C0323/1754/12, Duff Cooper's statement to the press, 4 October 1940.

<sup>155</sup> PRO, INF1/550, Directors meeting in the Ministry of Information, 1 October 1940.



For thousands of years men have been tempted by visions of world conquest to sell their souls to a tyrant. Under the thin disguise of new catch-words, the Nazis have started the old futile game of building a slave empire.

The British Empire is exactly the opposite. There has been nothing like it in the world before; it is a commonwealth, a family of free nations - linked together by a loyalty to one king. It stands for progress; it is the hope of the future.<sup>156</sup>

According to a Mass Observation Report this kind of advertising was not popular with the British public. Only 29% of a sample of one thousand had even noticed the campaign. The most frequent comments were, 'I agree with them, but I think it is rather a waste of paper that sort of thing. I think there are more important things' and 'they're not at all bad really, though there's too much in them'. One even thought the campaign was 'something to do with A.R.P. workers'.<sup>157</sup>

The Minister of Information, Duff Cooper himself wondered if the campaign was necessary and Harold Nicolson his Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State objected to it because he did 'not think we should spend large sums on anything which is not essential'.<sup>158</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Lloyd felt it was 'an entirely deplorable piece of prose but innocuous I think except for those possessed of literary taste'.<sup>159</sup>

Such private misgivings behind the safety of closed doors were one thing but the campaign elicited the criticism of the Labour peer Lord Olivier\*. Lord Olivier was a maverick who with the Webbs, George Bernard Shaw and Graham Wallas was a founder member of the Fabian Society. He had combined political activity with a distinguished yet controversial career in the civil service in the Colonial Office, in the Colonial Service as Governor of Jamaica and

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<sup>156</sup> The Observer, 13 October 1940 quoted in McLaine, op.cit., p.223.

<sup>157</sup> Mass Observation Reports Nos. 518 and 528, December 1940.

<sup>158</sup> Quoted in McLaine, op.cit., p.223.

<sup>159</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/12, minute by Lord Lloyd, 7 October 1940.

as a minister as Secretary of State for India in the first Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald. Never a mainstream Fabian (he resigned from the Executive of the Society in protest against Fabian justifications of the Boer War) he was always outspoken and a 'champion of the under-dog'. He followed his conscience even when it was inconvenient to his party, for example his appointment to the West Indies Sugar Commission in 1929 led to his public attack on the Labour government's free trade policies which caused embarrassment to the Labour government.<sup>160</sup> With this pedigree it is not surprising then that Lord Olivier would feel it was his duty to expose British hypocrisy, even in wartime. The New Statesman published a letter from Lord Olivier which criticised the Empire Crusade press advertisements. Olivier argued that the people of the empire, far from being 'free', as was suggested by the advertisements' talk of such things as liberty, were still subject peoples and that some 'natives' in North and South Rhodesia were even being flogged. While he agreed that the MOI was right that in the case of Southern Rhodesia although 'not as yet an equal partner, controls its own affairs', he pointed out that this was only true as far as the white minority was concerned as the 'natives' had no democratic rights or representation. He argued that 'only when these people are free will we really stand as the opposite of the Nazi system which the Ministry's [MOI] statement rightly condemns'.<sup>161</sup>

Reaction to Lord Olivier's outburst was furious, with minutes suggesting that the Colonial Office felt it had been betrayed by one of its own. Sir Cosmo Parkinson, the Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, while stating his opinion that Lord Olivier was 'senile' (Olivier was 81), thought that the letter was intolerable, represented no less than anti-British propaganda and

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<sup>160</sup> For an appreciation of Olivier's career and his contribution to Fabian thought, c.f. Francis Lee, Fabianism and Colonialism: the Life and Political Thought of Lord Sydney Olivier (London, 1988).

<sup>161</sup> PRO, CO875/11/6, Olivier's letter in the New Statesman, 21 December 1940.



questioned Lord Olivier and the New Statesman's interest in winning the war. Parkinson argued that 'when we are struggling for existence can we hope to have all peacetime ideas of progress and development carried on as if no one had ever heard of such a thing as war?'. Moreover, the wartime legislation, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, had been ignored by Olivier's criticism which galled Parkinson even more because it represented a 'triumph for the Colonial Office as it revolutionises the age-long Treasury attitude towards colonies'.<sup>162</sup>

The Secretary of State for the Colonies and 'intense imperial patriot'<sup>163</sup>, Lord Lloyd, thought that it would be possible to ignore the letter as 'no one who knows Lord Olivier would pay attention to him'. The danger was according to Lloyd, that too many people did not know Olivier.<sup>164</sup>

Sabine, the Colonial Office's Public Relations Officer, thought that the letter would have little impact as the New Statesman was a left wing intellectual publication with a small circulation. He felt the answer lay in publicising an 'expose of our colonial policy and some of the steps which have been taken even after the outbreak of the war'.<sup>165</sup>

The experience of actually conducting propaganda about the British colonial empire under wartime conditions proved to be rather different from the assumptions made by the shadow MOI in the pre-war period. In this initial part of the war machinery was hastily improvised. The propagandists both at home and in the colonies had to make do with what already existed and survived on a diet of generalised propaganda output from London until the adaptation of propaganda material to particular territorial

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<sup>162</sup> PRO, C0875/11/6, minute by Parkinson, 30 December 1940.

<sup>163</sup> John Charmley, Lord Lloyd and the Decline of the British Empire (London, 1987), p.2.

<sup>164</sup> PRO, C0875/11/6, minute by Parkinson, 30 December 1940; minute by Lloyd, 31 December 1940.

<sup>165</sup> PRO, C0875/11/6, minute by Sabine, 28 December 1940.

requirements. The staples of propaganda output was but news, posters and pamphlets. The relationship between the MOI and the Colonial Office did not help matters either, as the Colonial Office was unimpressed by the expertise of the Colonial Section of the Empire Division and what they considered to be suitable propaganda about the empire. The theme of colonial propaganda was scarcely more imaginative than stressing 'unity' against the universal enemy Nazism and praise for the colonial contribution to the war effort. Despite a move away from this kind of simplistic morale boosting propaganda with the publicity produced for the introduction of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, and the hopes for a long-term educative propaganda about the empire in general, little improved as the ill-advised 'Empire Crusade' showed.



## CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'PUBLICITY SENSE' ABOUT EMPIRE:  
EXPANSION IN PROPAGANDA, 1941-42

During 1941 the projection of British empire to Africa and the projection of the British empire at home was gradually improved and developed. The Colonial Office began to acquire a 'publicity sense'. Liaison with other bodies improved and the Colonial Office took care in its handling of sensitive areas of propaganda to the United States and race relations. Propaganda techniques in the colonies were reviewed and the use of broadcasting and film assumed greater prominence.

The problem of divided responsibility between the MOI and the Colonial Office however remained with two conflicting ideas of what propaganda in the colonies should be. As we saw in chapter one, this was the period when the public relations specialists in the Colonial Office, Sabine and Edmett voiced their increased concern about the MOI's 'win the war' propaganda. They urged the adoption of a long-term campaign of public relations, both at home and in the colonies. By stimulating an understanding of British colonial policy, they argued, propaganda could help to provide constructive solutions of Britain's colonial problems and would reflect the new colonial mission embodied in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. In fact some of the Information Officers in the colonies had also come to the conclusion that a diet of war propaganda was insufficient fare for colonial audiences and had begun the first steps in conducting public relations in their territories. By the end of 1941 the MOI agreed to incorporate long-term propaganda into their war propaganda output.

The Colonial Office Public Relations Officer, Noel Sabine was anxious that the Colonial Office should make headway in its own efforts to educate the British public about the empire. As part of this the Colonial Office learnt to be more responsive and pro-active in its relations with the Press. Under wartime conditions of paper rationing the colonial empire had to compete with other more exciting war stories. Therefore any interest

shown by the Press in the empire was something to be encouraged. The Colonial Office received more and more requests from the both the regional and national British press for interviews by the Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup> While this can be seen as evidence of an increased press interest in colonial affairs it also led to a new consideration by the Colonial Office of their relations with the press. Under the two previous publicity-minded Secretaries of State, Malcolm MacDonald and Lord Lloyd the matter of requests from individual journalists had not arisen as they both had 'a good deal of personal contact with the Press and saw them privately'.<sup>2</sup>

The Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Sir John Shuckburgh, recommended that the new Secretary of State, Lord Moyne, should refuse all requests because it would lead to a situation in which all press correspondents would want personal interviews. As Chairman of the West Indies Royal Commission, Lord Moyne would have been aware of the need for the positive projection of the British empire. Lord Moyne, overruled Shuckburgh and in principle agreed to see individual journalists interested in colonial affairs. He wanted each request to be judged on its own merit and on the condition that there was the understanding that no publicity would be given to the fact that an interview had been granted.<sup>3</sup>

The Public Relations Officer, Sabine, also recommended that press conferences should become a more regular part of Colonial Office procedure. The Secretary of State, Sabine suggested, should hold briefings with four groups of journalists: Lobby correspondents, American journalists, the Empire Press Union<sup>4</sup> and correspondents of specialist

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<sup>1</sup> PRO, C0875/11/7, For example, requests in November 1941 from the Manchester Evening News, the Star, and the Evening Standard.

<sup>2</sup> PRO, C0875/11/7, minute by Sabine, 25 November 1942.

<sup>3</sup> PRO, C0875/11/7, minute by Shuckburgh, 26 November 1941; minute by Moyne, 3 December 1941.

<sup>4</sup> PRO, INF1/73, by 1943 the Empire Press Union represented 120 Empire correspondents in London.



publications. He recommended that it was preferable to see these groups individually as they had different interests and certain subjects would appeal to only some of them. The Lobby was considered to be a 'close corporation of political correspondents' with whom confidential matters could be discussed without fear of disclosure. Moreover, it was the practice of other Ministers to see the Lobby separately and the Lobby was 'jealous of this privilege'. American correspondents were highly paid 'and would not take kindly to the idea of being included in any mass conference'. It was also thought advisable to see the Americans separately as they were likely to ask 'difficult questions'. The Empire Press Union represented largely the Dominion and Indian press and did not like other non-members attending their conferences. They would be interested in the 'Imperial aspect' of colonial questions. Finally, representatives of the specialist press like the Crown Colonist and individuals such as Rudolph Dunbar of the Associated Negro Press in London and Rita Hinden\* of the newly established Fabian Colonial Bureau should be seen separately as they were 'often concerned with small domestic details as well as larger questions'. The alternative was for the Secretary of State to see the Lobby and the rest could be catered for in a 'free for all at the MOI'. Sabine was keen for the Colonial Office to control the transmission of information to the Press and did not favour the MOI approach as 'many of these journalists who attend these MOI conferences are not of a very high standing'. Sabine was not in favour of creating a precedent of meeting journalists except under the 'Colonial Office roof'.<sup>5</sup>

Sabine's suggestions encountered traditional Colonial Office antipathy towards public relations. Shuckburgh thought that the specialist correspondents would simply have to fit in elsewhere and cautioned the Secretary of State that 'truckling to the Press like most other things

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<sup>5</sup> PRO, CO875/12/12, minute by Sabine, October 1941.

can be taken too far'.<sup>6</sup>

As Sabine himself admitted his suggestions were hardly revolutionary. Since February 1941 when Moyne became Secretary of State he had only held three conferences, one with the Lobby, one with the Empire Press Union and one with American correspondents. He did not suggest that Press conference should take place on a regular basis, but approximately three or four times a year and only when there was something 'really important to say'. In view of their projected rarity, Acting Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, agreed that the Secretary of State could see all four groups as proposed.<sup>7</sup>

The possibility of producing a stock of photographs to illustrate any articles that might be written by press correspondents was also explored. Hodson, Director of the Empire Division of the MOI thought that an application could be made to the Treasury for a grant of 6,000 pounds to 'fill in gaps', noting the successful result of the despatch of two photographers to East and South Africa to provide material for a special addition the Picture Post produced about the empire. Ernest Sabben-Clare, the Colonial Office-MOI Liaison Officer thought it would be cheaper to use local talent. When East Africa was asked to provide local photographs, however, they were advised that there were no local facilities available to produce quality photographs, but added East Africa would welcome a visit by MOI photographers.<sup>8</sup> The scheme was abandoned due to paper shortages which made articles about the colonies a luxury. Stories about the empire had to compete with other war news and this meant that there was 'little or no demand for photographs from the colonies'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> PRO, CO875/12/12, minute by Shuckburgh, 16 November 1941.

<sup>7</sup> PRO, CO875/12/12, minute by Sabine, 25 November 1941; minute by Parkinson 27 November 1941.

<sup>8</sup> PRO, CO875/11/17, Hodson to Colonial Office, 19 February 1941; minute by Sabben-Clare, 14 March 1941; East African Governors's Conference to Colonial Office, 23 May 1941.

<sup>9</sup> PRO, CO875/11/17, minute by Wilson, 25 June 1941.



Propaganda in Britain would concentrate on informed opinion, a 'long term education policy' rather than a 'blitz campaign'. One method suggested was to improve the contacts between colonial troops stationed in Britain and the public through a public lecture series which would be aimed at 'informed opinion'. This would help to avoid the creation of stereotypes on both sides: 'The English, and it is not a question of class, regard the colonials as rough, rude men, while the latter increasingly regard the English as snobs'. By introducing a 'more exotic element of a good black or brown speaker into such communities might raise considerable thought and talk'. The result was intended to lead to such comments as 'black as your hat he was, but I must say he spoke a lot of sense'. It was thought preferable to introduce colonials by this method rather than to follow the suggestion proposed by Kenneth Clark's War Artists Committee to mount an exhibition of 'native' paintings. Such an exhibition would be a costly undertaking and could be a future project as such an exhibition would have a 'novelty' value and could 'stimulate a certain amount of enquiring interest'. Posters on the colonial theme in Britain were thought to have dubious value unless connected to the theme of reconstruction which at the time would have been 'contrary to government policy'.<sup>10</sup>

The nomenclature of the British Commonwealth of Nations received attention because of the sensitivity of using the correct descriptive terms and to ensure consistency was observed. All those involved in government publicity about the empire were circulated with a list of 'dos and dont's'. Getting the terminology right was seen as important in a war where 'imperialism' was used by the enemy in its most pejorative sense. This list is so revealing that it is worth quoting in full:

DONT'S

1. Don't use 'British' when 'United Kingdom' is meant, e.g. when you wish to identify troops coming from the United Kingdom only, use the phrase 'United Kingdom troops'. 'British troops' is the phrase which covers

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<sup>10</sup> PRO, CO875/11/20, Molesworth of the MOI, October 1941.

troops from all parts of the Empire.

2. Don't use the adjective 'IMPERIAL' at all. It is commonly used to mean three quite different things and in addition is disliked in certain parts of the British Empire. Thus its use is undesirable because it creates both confusion and prejudice.
3. Don't use 'BRITISH EMPIRE' when you mean the Colonial parts of the Empire as distinct from the United Kingdom, self-governing Dominions and India. 'BRITISH EMPIRE' includes the United Kingdom.

#### DOS

1. Do use 'UNITED KINGDOM' as an adjective, e.g. United Kingdom troops. This enabled a clear distinction to be drawn between troops from the Home Country and troops from the Overseas Dominions, Colonies, etc. Here Axis propaganda has benefited from past confusion in nomenclature. Many nouns are used as adjectives nowadays, however improper it may be.
2. Do use the phrases 'BRITISH EMPIRE' or 'BRITISH COMMONWEALTH' when you are speaking of all parts of the British Empire, i.e. the United Kingdom, the Dominions, India and the Colonies. The phrases are in practice interchangeable though there are contexts in which one will be more appropriate than the other.<sup>11</sup>

Great care was also taken in the treatment of the 'race' issue in guiding the media. The Colonial Office took the lead in the usage of the 'correct' terms to describe colonial peoples. For example, a Colonial Office Press Officer who managed to 'inspire' a series of articles in the Daily Express about the colonial war effort in the hope that it would be followed up in other papers in the 'age old habit of newspapers following each other in news and features' had to impress upon the journalist to use the term 'African' as opposed to 'negro'.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Lord Moyne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, tried to play down the issue of the colour bar in Africa in a press conference he gave to the Empire Press Union. He said:

In East Africa he did not think the problem of the colour bar was so acute as in the West Indies. He had found that the colour bar was worse between those people with some European blood and pure Africans than

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<sup>11</sup> PRO, CO875/14/14, Whelan to Keating, 13 March 1943.

<sup>12</sup> PRO, CO875/11/12, Collins to Sabine, 19 March 1941; Collins to Morley Richards (Daily Express), 19 April 1941.



it was between Europeans and native populations. He did not believe there was any substantial coloured as distinct from African population in East Africa. He had also found in Africa that the native populations were very much more backward and still had their own way of life and in many cases did not want to take part in European life.<sup>13</sup>

There were also complaints about the repeated use of the word 'nigger' in BBC broadcasts which led to complaints from African colonies.<sup>14</sup> The Colonial Office censured the BBC:

We can imagine items in which 'nigger' might be inevitable and appropriate, e.g. a dramatic scene featuring a bad probably Teutonic white man, but if this was not the case [we] hope you will take the matter up and intensify the war against 'nigger as against native' in Empire broadcasts.<sup>15</sup>

The BBC assured the Colonial Office that they would inform both the Home and Empire Services of the BBC, hoping they would not 'blot our copy book in this respect again'.<sup>16</sup>

Ivor Cummings, the first black man to work in the Colonial Office as a Welfare Officer seconded from Sierre Leone complained about the unfortunate use of the term 'nigger' in a MOI film the Night Watch. He pointed out that this film would be shown both at home and in the empire and that at one point the principal actress 'referring to the arduous rescue efforts of a Civil Defence worker said, "He worked like a nigger"'. The MOI was duly informed.<sup>17</sup>

#### Race and Empire

The issue of 'race' both in Britain and in the colonies received attention at the highest policy level

<sup>13</sup> PRO, CO875/12/12, Moyne's Press Conference, 5 June 1941.

<sup>14</sup> PRO, CO875/18/5, Gold Coast to Colonial Office, 14 January 1941.

<sup>15</sup> PRO, CO875/18/5, Sabben-Clare to Barkway 4 March 1941.

<sup>16</sup> PRO, CO875/18/5, Rendall to Sabben-Clare, 6 March 1941.

<sup>17</sup> PRO CO875/18/5, minute by Cummings, 8 July 1941; minute by Sabine, 8 July 1941.

during the war. This led to an examination of the possibilities of introducing race relations legislation and a long term education campaign to promote equality between the races. This episode is significant for the light it sheds on contemporary attitudes towards race and the extent to which the Colonial Office was concerned about this contentious problem.

While the colour bar and racial prejudice existed in the British colonies, it could be argued that the British Isles were relatively free from the problems of race relations. Britain circa 1939 was a predominantly 'white' country. Probably no more than 8,000 black people lived in Britain and were mainly concentrated in the port areas of Cardiff, Liverpool, London and Newcastle. The war brought a new influx of black people from the colonies, about 1,000 to Edinburgh and 350 to Merseyside. This new influx was designed to be an emergency wartime measure only. In January 1942 a Foreign Office official noted that 'the recruitment to the United of coloured British subjects, whose remaining in the United Kingdom after the war might create a social problem, was not considered desirable'.<sup>18</sup>

However small the number, the Colonial Office took a strong line against any racial intolerance during the war. Ways were explored to overcome any manifestation of racism both as a matter of policy, protecting the interests of colonial people working for the war effort and studying at British Universities and, it seems, resulting from genuine feelings against discrimination on the basis of race.

Lord Moyne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to Herbert Morrison\*, the Home Secretary, to voice his concerns about the 'colour feeling' in Britain. Moyne thought this was particularly deplorable during the war 'when Africans, West Indians and other coloured people throughout the Empire are throwing themselves so wholeheartedly into our war effort'. Moyne noted that a major area in which colour prejudice was rife was in public houses and inns. He understood that there was a common law

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<sup>18</sup> David Reynolds, Rich Relations: the American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945 (London, 1995), pp.216-7.



obligation for innkeepers to provide accommodation and refreshment to travellers but recognised the weakness of enforcing this obligation as any enforcement would have to be carried out by a civil action. It was also possible that the innkeeper could argue that he had no rooms available. Moyne therefore wondered whether it would be 'practicable' to

pass a statute defining and, if necessary, enlarging this common law right and providing simple means whereby it could be enforced.

Moyne illustrated the problem with reference to a specific case of an Assistant Welfare Officer in the Colonial Office who was recently refused accommodation in a hotel in the north of England 'but when the management learned that he was an employed by the Colonial Office they changed their ground'. Moyne suggested a meeting between representatives of the Colonial and Home Offices to consider this question.<sup>19</sup>

A meeting was duly held at the Colonial Office which considered two options, 1) 'declaratory' legislation stating that it was illegal to discriminate against a British subject and 2) a codification of the existing law without specifically mentioning colour which would make refusal of admission a 'summary offence'. The meeting noted that the common law applied only to 'inns' and not to hotels or boarding houses where it would be most needed. The meeting concluded that it would not be

desirable for a Bill to be introduced as a political gesture on the part of the Government, as indicating its views on the question of colour prejudice, and as a means of educating public opinion.

A similar Colonial Office suggestion that the government should make a statement of its views on the subject was rejected on the grounds that it would not have more than an 'ephemeral effect'. The meeting concluded the best 'remedy' lay in the 'steady education of public opinion'.<sup>20</sup>

The 'negative' conclusions of the meeting discouraged

<sup>19</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, Moyne to Morrison, 27 June 1941.

<sup>20</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, minutes of a meeting at the Colonial Office, 14 July 1941.

many in the Colonial Office. John Keith of the Social Services Department of the Colonial Office with his experience in African education in Northern Rhodesia and of the territory's informal colour bar, sincerely believed in racial equality as an ideal for the British empire. He was sorry that the proposed legislation had been thrown out merely because it would not apply to all establishments:

I think it is a matter of high policy that Colonial people should not be insulted, and legislation, although largely "declaratory" in character, ought to have the desired effect in that regard.

Jesse Paskin\*, the Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, agreed, and urged Moyne to proceed 'in spite of the fact that its effects would be psychological rather than practical'.<sup>21</sup> Sir Charles Jeffries, Assistant Under-Secretary State supervising the Social Services Department, was also 'rather shaken' by the objections raised at the meeting as he had been thinking along the lines of an act similar to the Sex Equality Act for women. Harold Beckett\*, Assistant Secretary of State in the East African Department of the Colonial Office with wide experience of the problems of the West Indies was not surprised by the response of the Home Office and thought that any legislation in this area should be 'brought in line with modern conditions' without special reference to 'colour'.

In general, hotel-keepers govern themselves according to the presumed prejudices of their regular class of clients and are most likely to be 'choosy' if there is a residential element of snobs. In some places a wet and dirty 'hiker' has about as good a chance as a coal-black mammy.

He agreed that the remedy lay in the steady but 'intensive' education of public opinion.<sup>22</sup>

Owen Williams\*, Assistant Secretary of State, feared that the enacting of a law which would be 'so patently ineffective' could have the opposite result than that intended. There was a danger that legislation would

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<sup>21</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, minutes by Keith, 22 August 1941 and Paskin, 27 August 1941.

<sup>22</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, minutes by Jeffries 27 August 1941 and Beckett, 28 August 1941.



exacerbate colour prejudice and would be hailed as 'further evidence of our national hypocrisy'. He gave an honest appreciation of the problem as he saw it:

As for educating public opinion (including my own prejudices) into a more tolerant attitude, I am all for it, but how is it to be done? We must have some kind of snobbery to keep us going and the more levelling there is of class distinctions the more racial distinctions are likely to acquire snobbery value.<sup>23</sup>

Sir Alan Burns\* lent his support to Colonial Office indignation on this subject. Burns had wide experience of the British empire and attitudes of the Colonial Service during a career of service in Nigeria, as the former Governor of British Honduras and was later Governor of the Gold Coast. He had been seconded to the Colonial Office as an Assistant Under-Secretary of State where he had negotiated the bases for destroyers agreement with the United States in March 1941. Burns was a progressive. Later as Governor of the Gold Coast he had taken the lead by appointing Africans to his Executive Council and was used to cutting through red tape and getting on with things.<sup>24</sup> He believed that a Governor had the power and responsibility to lead by example, for 'personal example and the kind of life he leads have a greater influence on the colony than is commonly recognised'.<sup>25</sup> Burns thought that colour prejudice resulted largely from bad manners:

It is a matter for slow but steady education of the British public rather than for legislation, as I doubt whether we can improve people's manners any more than their morals by passing laws. If our manners were better we would have less political trouble in the Colonies.

He added that he had tried to make this point in a book that he had not been allowed to publish.<sup>26</sup>

Sir Alan Burns eventually published his book Colour Prejudice in 1948. It is clear why Burns' book would have

<sup>23</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, minute by Williams, 29 August 1941.

<sup>24</sup> Parkinson, op.cit., pp. 108-9.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Burns, Colonial Civil Servant (London, 1949), p.169.

<sup>26</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, minute by Burns 29 August 1941.

been controversial, particularly coming from the pen of a governor of a British colony. For while he wrote about the benefits of Pax Britannica for the populations of the empire, he also drew attention to the impact of the white man in Africa, taking land away from Africans and criticised the racial policies of South Africa and the United States. Burns did not believe in the inferiority of black people or that colour prejudice was natural and inherent in man. He felt it was borne out of economic fears on the part of white men. As he argued in 1941 behaviour was the key. He recommended that it was possible,

without much expense and without much trouble, to remove one of the most potent causes of racial discord, by an immediate change in our attitude to those of coloured blood. It is not to suggest that Englishmen should abandon their traditional reserve (even if they were capable of doing so) and make violent demonstrations of brotherly love; such demonstrations would certainly be misunderstood and quite unwelcome to the Negroes. But it is suggested that we should avoid, in manner, speech and writing, an attitude of disdain for everyone who does not possess a white skin, and that we should show to such people a simple courtesy. Such courtesy would be in accordance with our professed Christian belief, and would be a better hall-mark of civilisation and culture than any material progress that may have been made.<sup>27</sup>

Writing to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Cosmo Parkinson the acting Permanent Under-Secretary of State, stated that the only way to get rid of colour prejudice was by education, and education would take 'at least a generation'. This was not an argument for prevarication, however. 'There must be a beginning some time', he argued, 'why not now?' He therefore recommended that the Colonial Office explore the issue with the Board of Education.<sup>28</sup>

Paskin cautioned against any 'very obtrusive propaganda' in Britain because of the political implications this would have in the colonies. For while the problem of colour prejudice was manifest largely on the

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<sup>27</sup> Alan Burns, Colour Prejudice (London, 1948), pp.149-50.

<sup>28</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, Parkinson to Moyne, 29 August 1941.



social plane in Britain, in the colonies, particularly in Northern Rhodesia and Kenya, it was 'bound up with questions of high political importance'. Therefore he recommended that before the Colonial Office embarked on 'obtrusive propaganda', it was important to 'consider the possible political repercussions in such Colonies and the Union of South Africa'. Unless a cautious approach was adopted to the education of the British population on racial equality, the Colonial Office might find itself 'involved in controversy over such matters as the Highlands policy in Kenya and the policy of setting aside residential areas for occupation by Europeans there and elsewhere'.<sup>29</sup>

In many ways the Colonial Office's educational solution can be seen as part of their general long-term attempts to educate the British public about the empire. The Colonial Office wanted to incorporate the issue of racial tolerance into geography and imperial history lessons in schools, in special lectures and in the schools broadcasts of the BBC. Colonial peoples could be represented in 'a human and sympathetic light', which recognised their value as 'individuals' as well as 'fellow citizens of the Empire'. The Colonial Office presented its case Board of Education rather optimistically:

Colour prejudice is largely a question of good manners and we feel that if a lead could be given to children to look on the coloured person as a fellow human being rather than as a figure of fun or a bogey, many of the absurd prejudices which make for unhappy racial relations would tend to die out.<sup>30</sup>

The Board of Education's response was lukewarm. The Board thought it might be possible to include something on the subject in a pamphlet on colonial studies but the general attitude was circumspect. The subject was considered a 'thorny' one and could 'provoke passions in much the same way as do questions of religious education and sex education'. The Board argued that the attitude of parents had to be considered because 'in certain districts

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<sup>29</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, minute by Paskin, 16 September 1941.

<sup>30</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, minute by Keith, 11 December 1941; Keith to Dunkley, 26 September 1941.

... e.g., the large ports, parents may very justifiably hold very strong feelings on the idea of the mingling together socially of coloured peoples and their own people'.<sup>31</sup> It was not enough to aim to educate the children without educating adults.

During a meeting between the BBC and the Colonial Office the subject of schools broadcasts about the colonies was considered. In particular, they discussed:

- (a) the need to tackle the colour bar problem ...
- (b) the need to give children information designed to make them respectful of other peoples' cultural values, sympathetic to them and interested in them.
- (c) the need to present modern problems of Colonial development, and not the savage dancing round the tom-tom.

No direct appeal had been made to schoolchildren to behave politely towards 'coloured strangers' beyond getting educated Africans to give schools talks. It was noted that tackling the colour bar problem in the colonies involved difficult political issues but that the BBC would be presenting an artificial picture of life in the colonies if programmes merely concentrated on aspects like 'geographical resources'. The BBC agreed to explore the possibility of introducing the problem in debate form in programmes for older children, and 'Elsbeth Huxley, or some other enlightened exponent of the settler point of view, might put the case in argument with an educated African'. In order to educate schoolchildren about the value of African culture and to respect Africans it was agreed that there should be an increase in programmes about the lives of individual Africans as 'ordinary people' and talks on African art and folklore. The BBC admitted that there was a problem in trying to present modern problems of colonial development instead of 'the savage dancing round the tom-tom'. Roy McGregor of the School Talks department at the BBC explained that, 'each course had actually contained one talk on the modern problems of different geographical regions' but the audience 'tended to remember elephants and dances, and not the enlightened Central School and the Leper Colony'. The School Talks department said they would

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<sup>31</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, Dunkley to Keith, 11 October 1941.



welcome a 'lead' in the form of a letter from the Colonial Office which would help to overcome possible objections within the BBC against the discussion of such 'political' matters.<sup>32</sup> The Colonial Office agreed to write a letter to the BBC in support of new programmes about colonial development.<sup>33</sup>

The Colonial Office was similarly concerned with the problem of colour prejudice in the Colonial Service as well as in the colonies in general. Considerations were very different then. This was the period before the principle of the 'Africanisation' of the Colonial Service had been introduced by the post-war Labour government. While the Colonial Office was sure that colour prejudice had not been a factor in its appointments to the Colonial Service, Sir Charles Jeffries was aware that in practice the Colonial Office could be found guilty of exercising a 'colour bar' on the grounds of what he called 'efficiency':

if we do not send a coloured West Indian to a senior appointment in Kenya, it is not because we have any prejudice against coloured West Indians, but simply because we know that the environment in which he would find himself in Kenya is one in which he could not be happy or do his work effectively.

Jeffries deplored the attitude on race that he had come across in his conversations with Colonial Service officers and their wives and thought it was up to the Colonial Office to give a lead to senior Colonial Service officers on this question. It was these officers, argued Jeffries, who often had 'the power to determine the tone of local society'.<sup>34</sup>

The issue of the colour bar and prejudice in the colonies came to the attention of the Colonial Office with the publication of Norman Leys' critical book The Colour Bar in East Africa in which he suggested that in certain East African colonies colour bars were as numerous as those found in South Africa. Questions about the discriminatory

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<sup>32</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, notes by Audrey Richards on a meeting with the BBC, 29 April 1942.

<sup>33</sup> PRO, CO859/80/7, minute by Keith, 8 May 1942.

<sup>34</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, minute by Jeffries, 9 May 1941.

treatment of West African troops stationed in East Africa at European cinemas in Nairobi had also been asked in Parliament.<sup>35</sup> Leys had sent the Colonial Office a copy of his book asking for Colonial Office criticisms and argued that 'treason and rebellion in East Africa are inevitable unless British policy is changed in time'.<sup>36</sup> The Colonial Office thought it impolitic and time-consuming to comment on his book but recommended that this 'important' book deserved 'serious examination' and should be read by the departments concerned in the Colonial Office.<sup>37</sup>

When the Colonial Office debated what to do about the colour bar in the colonies, John Keith cautioned against a premature declaration on the subject as it would 'cause unprofitable controversy', would be resented by white settlers and would 'certainly be misrepresented by Dr. Goebbels'.<sup>38</sup> Despite this he thought the problem should be tackled in some colonies like Northern Rhodesia and Kenya because 'if these problems are allowed to simmer they will become acute'. Keith recommended that the Colonial Office should discover the extent of the colour bar problem before taking any action against it by asking the colonial Governors to undertake a survey of colour discrimination in their colony. What was wanted was a more balanced view than was gained by reading Leys' book.<sup>39</sup>

Frederick Pedler\*, Principal in the Colonial Office, and soon to be Chief British Economic Representative in Dakar, had been Lord Hailey's secretary when the latter was compiling his African Survey argued that the problem of the colour bar in the colonies was not merely that of 'social' discrimination through pass laws and separate housing which

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<sup>35</sup> For the correspondence on the discrimination suffered by West African troops in Nairobi cinemas see PRO, CO859/80/15, file.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, CO859/80/14, Leys to Hall, 4 December 1941.

<sup>37</sup> PRO, CO859/80/14, minute by Dawe, 12 December 1941.

<sup>38</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, memorandum 'Colour Discrimination in the United Kingdom', by Keith, undated.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, minute by Keith, 30 August 1941.



could benefit from government propaganda and re-education, but was 'economic' discrimination. This 'economic' discrimination had already become a 'thorny problem' in Central Africa 'in regard to the employment of natives on the Copperbelt where the European miners would undoubtedly like to see the South African and Southern Rhodesian ideas established'. Moreover, any strong line adopted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies or a Governor in Kenya where the Highlands were reserved for white only settlement would lead to charges of hypocrisy. Although Pedler agreed that the first step should be a 'dispassionate review' of the problem, he doubted that the colonial governments, particularly those in East Africa, could do so objectively. Instead he recommended that an independent body like Chatham House should be asked to do the work.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Sir Charles Jeffries thought that something could be done if the Secretary of State for the Colonies made a declaration of 'one basic policy for dealing with all colour questions'. He argued:

nothing short of absolute equality of all men before the law will serve, either to satisfy the aspirations of the inhabitants of the Colonial Empire or to justify our existence as a Colonial power.

Such a declaration should be made as soon as possible together with an undertaking to review the whole of colonial administration in the post-war period with the aim of all discriminatory laws and practices. The survey of colour bar legislation should be commenced forthwith. Jeffries was not naive enough to believe this would be easy. Indeed, he was well aware of the reaction of the white settler minorities 'who depend for their existence upon the artificial protection afforded by discriminatory laws'. But this was no reason for inaction. The Colonial Office should proceed 'fortier in re' but 'suaviter in modo' (forcibly in deed, gentle in manner).<sup>41</sup>

However, while the Permanent Under-Secretary of State,

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<sup>40</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, minute by Pedler, 26 September 1941.

<sup>41</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, minute by Jeffries, 8 October 1941.

Sir George Gater agreed with Jeffries' sentiments that colour discrimination should be 'eliminated', he did not think that a declaration should be made before a careful review had been made of the present situation. He thought that much could be done by the 'personal example' of the colonial Governors and the officers of the Colonial Service.<sup>42</sup> Thus for the time being Jeffries would have to be content with the decision to survey the existing situation first before any steps were taken. The Colonial Office arranged for the present position of discriminatory laws in the colonies to be examined by Sir Mervyn Tew, the legal expert and former Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, 1929-32.<sup>43</sup> While the issue was temporarily put on 'hold', later in the war the Colonial Office met a new obstacle to a forward policy on racial discrimination: the entrance of the United States into the war and the new problems caused by the segregationist 'Jim Crow' policies of the American armed services.<sup>44</sup>

Sir Charles Jeffries concluded that there was probably less colour prejudice in Britain than ever before. In his opinion this was due to '(a) to the presence of Colonial people in this country for war work [and] (b) to the reaction caused by the attitude of the Americans'. As the Colonial Office and the MOI were proceeding with their new initiative in educating the British public about the colonies this initiative would 'incidentally help to reduce colour prejudice' and would be more useful than 'direct propoganda on the question of colour'.<sup>45</sup>

#### Relations with Other Bodies

Cooperation between Ministries in the colonial propoganda effort became more apparent. For example, the Air Ministry gave priority to the naming of a Ugandan air squadron following the 83,000 pound contribution made in

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<sup>42</sup> PRO, C0859/80/13, minute by Gater, 20 October 1941.

<sup>43</sup> PRO, C0859/80/13, minute by Jeffries, 26 November 1941.

<sup>44</sup> C.f. chapter five.

<sup>45</sup> PRO, C0859/80/7, minute by Jeffries, 30 September 1942.



1941 by Uganda for the purchase of aircraft. This was thought to be good propaganda for Uganda as it would show that their efforts were appreciated and Uganda's contributions were further reported in the British press as part of propaganda for empire unity.<sup>46</sup>

The Army was also singled out for a publicity effort as part of the campaign to educate Britons about the colonies in cooperation with the Army Bureau of Current Affairs which had been set up in September 1941. Soldiers, especially conscripts, were to have a great interest in learning about and discussing current affairs. Sir John Dill, the Commander in Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had said, 'the soldier who understands the cause for which he fights is likely to be a more reliable soldier than one who doesn't'. The Colonial Office was keen to ensure that the Army would include discussions about the colonies and it was thought that W.E. Williams of Penguin books and the director of the ABCA was someone it would pay the Colonial Office 'handsomely to cultivate'.<sup>47</sup>

The Colonial Office also thought it would be useful to cultivate the newly formed Fabian Colonial Bureau. The Colonial Office explored the possibility of establishing a relationship with Dr. Rita Hinden, the South African born economist, the editor of their publication, Empire and Secretary of the FCB, who was later given the soubriquet of 'Rudyard Hardie' by Denis Healey for her work for colonial freedom.<sup>48</sup> Coinciding with the introduction of the new colonial policy encapsulated in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, the FCB was established in October 1940 to provide the Fabian Society with a department which would deal with the problems of the dependent empire from a socialist viewpoint. Part of the FCB's work would be to

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<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO875/11/16, Cochrane, Air Ministry to Colonial Office, 3 May 1941; The Times, the Daily Mirror, and the Daily Telegraph, 30 May 1941.

<sup>47</sup> PRO, CO875/12/19, Dill, August 1941; minute by Eastwood, 11 September 1941.

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, Labour People, Leaders and Lieutenants: Hardie to Kinnock (Oxford, 1989), p.241 and pp.239-45 for an appreciation of her career.

act as a clearing house for colonial information and research in Britain and publicity about colonial affairs in the press and Parliament. The FCB was therefore working, albeit from a particular political standpoint and tradition, towards similar aims as the Colonial Office: educating the British about their empire. A representative from the Colonial Office attended their July 1941 conference in order to assess the FCB view point on colonial affairs and to understand the possible criticisms of colonial policy which the Colonial Office might expect in the future. Particular attention was given to Dr. Hinden's welcome of the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act and the praise for the government's initiative and liberal policy and her criticism that not enough capital had been committed to carry the new policy through. Arthur Creech Jones, the Labour MP, Chairman of the FCB and future Secretary of State for the Colonies, gave the introductory speech in which he outlined the conflicts contained within the expression of Britain's 'sacred trust':

there was the segregation of natives in Southern Rhodesia, stagnation in the Protectorates, a system of indirect rule in Nigeria, white paramountcy in Kenya, and colour discrimination in Northern Rhodesia. In all colonies the standard of social and economic conditions was deplorable.

The only good developments he could see were the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act and labour legislation.<sup>49</sup> The Colonial Office's Public Relations Officer Noel Sabine arranged for the African Information Officers to receive the FCB's Empire so that they could anticipate criticism, particularly on labour legislation.<sup>50</sup>

The Colonial Office continued to monitor the activities of the FCB throughout the war. For example, the head of the Colonial Office's Reference Division, Sir William McLean attended the FCB's conference 'the Colonies in the Post-War World' in July 1942. Although the FCB was

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<sup>49</sup> PRO, CO875/12/13, Wilson's report on the 18-20 July 1941 Fabian Colonial Bureau Conference, 22 July 1941.

<sup>50</sup> PRO, CO875/5/11, minute by Sabine, 27 October 1941.



criticised for getting things 'badly distorted' their interest was seen on the whole as a 'healthy sign'. McLean's Reference Division maintained contact with the FCB and provided the Bureau with 'factual information'.<sup>51</sup>

The BBC was also interested in appointing Rita Hinden as their colonial correspondent. News about the colonies intended for the Dominions, the United States and the colonies themselves was not reaching the BBC through normal press agency channels. Before the BBC proceeded, however, they wanted to ensure that Hinden was a 'person thoroughly grata' at the Colonial Office.<sup>52</sup> Sabine favoured the appointment, for even though Hinden was in his view a 'socialist with rather advanced views about the colonies' and at times was 'critical', Sabine felt she was 'genuinely anxious to help'. Moreover if Hinden were appointed it would give the Colonial Office 'some opportunity of controlling her activities'.<sup>53</sup> Acting Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir Cosmo Parkinson objected to the proposed appointment on two grounds. He doubted that the appointment was necessary in the first place as he assumed that the Empire Division in the MOI supplied the BBC with that kind of material, and second, because the 'BBC tends excessively to the "Left"' anyway.<sup>54</sup> Sabine disagreed. The Empire Division, he argued, did not provide 'news' to the colonies but 'propaganda' and colonial news broadcast on the BBC's Home Service was not the kind of news that the BBC wanted for their Empire Service. For example, the Empire Service would require more detailed news than the Home Service. Similarly, an item on 'native' housing in Nairobi would only be of interest to the more specialised press in Britain but would be ideal for the Empire Service.

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<sup>51</sup> PRO, CO875/15/1, Thomas to Benson and Lloyd, 3 December 1943.

<sup>52</sup> PRO, CO875/11/10, BBC to Sabine, 25 November 1941.

<sup>53</sup> PRO, CO875/11/10, minute by Sabine, 2 December 1941. Morgan confirms Sabine's view of Hinden, often misleadingly labelled a 'Utopian socialist' her approach was in fact more 'common-sense Fabian', op. cit., p.239.

<sup>54</sup> PRO, CO875/11/10, minute by Parkinson, 9 December 1941.

In any case Sabine thought that the BBC had 'been criticised in certain quarters for not allowing persons whose views about the war were perhaps suspect to speak on subjects quite unconnected with the war or even to take any part in BBC musical programmes'. The Colonial Office could assume a form of control if it provided Hinden with the information on which to base broadcasts. It was also wise, he thought, not to look the BBC gift horse in the mouth.<sup>55</sup>

Sabine, however, was overruled. Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Sir John Shuckburgh with his usual suspicion about Colonial Office involvement in propaganda activities, had no enthusiasm for the proposal and was wary of the BBC. In Shuckburgh's opinion, the BBC had 'consistently misled the public over the war news (not their fault I daresay) that little credit attaches itself to their statements on any subject'. Furthermore he did not think that 'a Fabian lady doctor acting through so tainted a medium will do much to persuade the world of the excellence of our colonial policy'.<sup>56</sup> It was not until 1943 that the BBC got its colonial correspondent in the person of Elspeth Huxley.

There is a case to be made for the objections to the appointment of Hinden by cautious elements within the Colonial Office. On political grounds, the Colonial Office may have found the appointment embarrassing, particularly if they had endorsed it and may have been open to accusations of partisanship. It is then perhaps ironic that the FCB and the work by Creech Jones in formulating the Labour Party's 1943 statement on the colonial empire The Colonies reflected what had become by then Colonial Office orthodoxy. In 1943 both the Colonial Office and the FCB argued that political developments on the road to self-government in the British colonies had to be preceded by social and economic developments first. But there is also a definite sense that Sabine's enthusiasm for appointing Hinden was overruled on the grounds of a general lack of

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<sup>55</sup> PRO, C0875/11/10, minute by Sabine, 13 December 1941.

<sup>56</sup> PRO, C0875/11/10, minute by Shuckburgh, 15 December 1941.



sympathy with what the BBC, with the support of the propaganda specialists in the Colonial Office, was trying to do.

It could be argued that the subsequent appointment of Elspeth Huxley as colonial correspondent at the BBC was hardly neutral or without controversy. Daughter of white settlers in Kenya, Elspeth Huxley was well known for her two volume biography of Lord Delamere which 'was critical in establishing in the public mind not only the stirring and romantic nature of white settlement but the pure and chivalrous intentions of white settlers towards Africans'.<sup>57</sup> To the Colonial Office Elspeth Huxley represented the acceptable face of settler interests and someone with a wide experience of Africa.<sup>58</sup> As the wife of Gervas Huxley who became the director of the Empire Division of the MOI in 1943, there was a practical working advantage in this husband and wife team at the centre of colonial propaganda. But to others Elspeth Huxley was a product of her background and was not impartial. In a review of her 1941 book East Africa which appeared in the FCB journal Empire, she was criticised for discussing the problems of East Africa 'with some degree of complacency' and for glossing over 'the injustices brought by white settlement'.<sup>59</sup>

#### Empire Publicity in the United States

No less controversial than the issue of race and the political motivations of the colonial correspondent for the BBC was the part propaganda could play in educating Americans about the British empire. Anti-imperialism was just one aspect of American attitudes towards Britain. American attitudes were complex, a mixture of love and hate; 'every current of anglophilia seemed to be matched by

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<sup>57</sup> Kathryn Tidrick, Empire and the English Character (London, 1990), p.143.

<sup>58</sup> Or as we saw earlier in the discussions of schools broadcasts on 'race', 'the enlightened exponent of the settler point of view'.

<sup>59</sup> Empire, 4:3, September 1941.

a countervailing surge of anglophobia'.<sup>60</sup> When the key to Britain's future survival was the attitude adopted by the United States, it was clearly in the interests of the British to maximise anglophilia and minimise anglophobia. In the pre-Pearl Harbour period it was axiomatic that Britain should be sensitive to American public opinion. Indeed the British Ambassador to Washington, Lord Lothian felt it was a 'vital factor', writing to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax in February 1940, 'in this country owing to the consitutional equality of status of the Executive and the Legislature, it is public opinion itself which is continually decisive'.<sup>61</sup> The anglophobia confronting the British had many dimensions, historical tradition and economic factors. Nicholas Cull has vividly portrayed the various facets of American anglophobia:

It flowed from the historic struggle to be free from tyrannical redcoats and a profligate king. Moreover, Britain's rigid class system seemed to represent the epitome of everything America had rejected in 1776. The scale of such feeling varied from region to region and from community to community ... German- and Irish-Americans had ample reason to despise London and saw themselves as having absolutely no stake in a war to save the British Empire. The farmers of the American interior recognized Britain's role in financing the railroads that bled them dry, and hence the British joined the plutocrats of Wall Street and the White House as central figures in the political demonology of the Prairies ... Even the enemies of Hitler were not necessarily admirers of Britain. American Jews knew who ruled Palestine, and American Communists knew who continued to refuse aid to the Republican side in Spain. Any American untouched by such ethnic or political allegiances could contemplate Britain's failure to pay its war debt or the commercial injustice of its system of imperial preference in trade.<sup>62</sup>

Even though Britain had her admirers in the United States, it was clear that some of these attitudes had to be overturned if Britain was to achieve her aim of American entry into the war. However caution dominated

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<sup>60</sup> Cull, op.cit., p.6.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind, the United States, Britain and the war against Japan, 1941-1945 (Oxford, 1978), p.106.

<sup>62</sup> Cull, op.cit., pp.6-7.



consideration of an active propaganda campaign win American support. Following the experience of British propaganda in the First World War (or, more correctly, the perceived success of British propaganda) Americans feared any activity which smacked of attempts to mould their opinion. Up until Pearl Harbour Britain's official line on publicity in the United States was 'No Propaganda'. In spite of the objections of the British Embassy in Washington and the MOI the Foreign Office remained staunch in its defence of this principle.<sup>63</sup> Even with this limitation the British were not inactive.<sup>64</sup>

It was thought that the root of American anti-imperialism was American ignorance. As far as propaganda about the British empire was concerned the British effort therefore consisted largely of correcting American misapprehensions about Britain's colonial policy, for example with the British Library of Information in New York on hand to answer queries. As we saw in chapter one, the British exhibit at the New York World's Fair of 1939 was designed to show the benefits Britain had brought to her empire. Sir William McLean, head of the Colonial Office Reference Department, was the Colonial Office representative at the Fair in 1939. McLean also undertook a lecture tour of the United States and dared to draw attention to American involvement in the British empire by thanking the Carnegie and Rockefeller Trusts for underwriting welfare schemes in the colonies. This produced headlines in the American press like, 'U.S. Cash Saving Native Masses in British Colonies'.<sup>65</sup>

In 1940 Lord Lloyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wanted to repeat the experiment and asked the Treasury for funding for a representative to serve at the British Colonial Exhibition of the New York World's Fair in

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<sup>63</sup> ibid., pp.10 and 29.

<sup>64</sup> Cull demonstrates exactly what was achieved in ensuring that the British case did not fall by default, ibid., passim.

<sup>65</sup> ibid., p.27.

mid-1940.<sup>66</sup> In 1940, William Simnett\*, the editor of the Crown Colonist, went to the United States as the Colonial Office's representative at the Fair. Between May and October 1940 he also undertook other publicity work including public lectures to bodies like Columbia University, the Phelps-Stokes Institute and the Carnegie Trust. He made broadcasts and wrote articles on the social services provided by colonial governments in the dependencies aimed at American opinion-makers.

Simnett's report on his activities in the United States highlighted the problems faced by colonial propagandists in America. He thought that it was of the utmost importance that, as the war was 'inevitably' bringing Britain and the United States closer together that they should be 'accurately informed of our policy and ideals'. There existed many misconceptions about ideas of 'Empire' and 'Imperialism'.

Even those intelligent Americans entirely favourable to our cause, who grant that we are fighting for the same ideals of freedom and democracy that they hold, still suspect a strong strain of 'Imperialism' with which they dislike to be associated. Educated people do more or less realise that the Dominions are now free peoples, but apart from India, which is a subject for constant criticism, they still think of us as an Empire with many 'possessions' which we are determined to hold and exploit to our own advantage.

It was this view that he took pains to contest by urging Americans that, that form of Imperialism was now 'dead'. He explained that Britain's declared policy was

trusteeship for Colonial peoples, to fit them for eventual self-government. This has always been the most eagerly welcomed part of my many speeches and talks, and has obviously been 'news' to Press and public alike, for not only have they apparently no information about it from us, but the opposite view is being assiduously cultivated by the other side for obvious reasons.

He recommended that something 'adequate and permanent' be done about this by way of supplying the press, educational and other institutions with information about the empire

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<sup>66</sup> PRO, FO371/24228/A2891, Caine to the Treasury, 21 May 1940.



and by active lecturing.<sup>67</sup>

The Colonial Office agreed that something more needed to be done. Up until this time it had to abide by the Foreign Office's rule that 'no political or cultural propaganda should be done' in the United States.<sup>68</sup> Hodson, head of the Empire Division of the MOI wanted to see the appointment of a colonial specialist to the British Information Service organisation in New York who would concentrate on propaganda to the 'intelligentsia'.<sup>69</sup> At a joint Colonial Office-MOI meeting in March 1941 the idea of appointing a colonial specialist to the British Embassy in Washington was proposed. Sabine thought that at that moment such a move was undesirable because of the ongoing talks about West Indian bases<sup>70</sup> and the issue of trade in wartime and exchange control in London. Despite this Sabine thought it would be possible to explore the idea of establishing a chair in colonial studies at an American university.<sup>71</sup>

Sabine thought that American support was so important that 'any and every source of misapprehension or misunderstanding should be resolutely attacked'. He warned, however, that it should not be done in a haphazard manner. If it was to be done at all it should be done 'ambitiously and well'.<sup>72</sup> Caution would have to be adopted because of the danger that open and forcible propaganda

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<sup>67</sup> PRO, FO371/24228/A2891, report by Simnett, 27 July - 25 August 1940.

<sup>68</sup> PRO, FO371/24230/A3561, Lloyd to Whyte, 29 July 1940.

<sup>69</sup> PRO, CO875/11/13, Hodson to the Colonial Office, 13 January 1941.

<sup>70</sup> Following the destroyers for bases deal of September 1940. The talks about the possible establishment of an Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in the West Indies also contributed to the need for a cautious approach on the subject of colonies.

<sup>71</sup> PRO, CO875/11/13, Sabine at the meeting of 28 March 1941.

<sup>72</sup> PRO, CO875/11/13, minute by Sabine, 28 April 1941.

could backfire with an 'undesirable re-action'.<sup>73</sup> Doubt was expressed by Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Sir John Shuckburgh who thought that it was not in 1941 that the British had to make its colonial case to the American public, but in the post-war period when American opinion might 'count for more than anything else'.<sup>74</sup> Sir Arthur Dawe thought it was a question of policy not for the Colonial Office but for the Foreign Office.<sup>75</sup>

The Colonial Office and Empire Division of the MOI had to await the outcome of the discussions about the organisation of British propaganda in the United States in general which had been the subject of debate since the summer of 1940, preceding a more 'positive' direct publicity effort. Frank Darvall\* head of the American Division of the MOI told the Colonial Office that for the past six months there had been a 'grand inquest' by the Foreign Office and MOI into British propaganda in the United States and that a more forward lecture policy had been agreed upon. Kenneth Grubb, head of the MOI's Foreign Publicity Directorate said that the Foreign Office supported such a move and that the main aim would be to 'dispel the widespread suspicion and misapprehension of the way in which our Empire is administered'.<sup>76</sup>

Sir Gerald Campbell\*, the director of the newly reorganised British propaganda agency in the United States, the British Information Service, informed Sabine that they would proceed slowly until it was seen 'how information about colonial affairs will fit into the general picture'.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the empire publicists would have to wait even longer to discover the impact of the American

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<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0875/11/13, minute by Calder, 8 May 1941.

<sup>74</sup> PRO, C0875/11/13, minute by Shuckburgh, 13 May 1941.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, C0875/11/13, minute by Dawe, 16 May 1941.

<sup>76</sup> PRO, C0875/11/13, Darvall to Colonial Office, 15 April 1941; Grubb to Colonial Office, 10 July 1941. For the files on the future of British publicity in the United States see further, PRO, F0371/24227-24232 and 26183-26188.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, C0875/11/13, note by Sabine on a conversation with Campbell, 21 July 1941.



entrance into the war on British propaganda in the United States.

But even if the colonial propagandists had been given a free rein in educating the American public about the facts of British treatment of her colonies it is hard to see how this could have had any real impact in combatting anti-imperialism. After all, as Simnett noted, even educated Americans suspected ulterior motives behind British possession of colonies. The task of 'educating' American public opinion about the British empire was made even more difficult when the object of the campaign became the American administration itself. Indeed the anti-imperialist attitude was so ingrained, with the British seen as the prime offenders in this respect in the popular eye, that the American public was quite able to ignore its own record. Therefore it is hard to see how a rational appeal to modify what was essentially an emotional response to the British empire could have succeeded.

#### Propaganda in East and Central Africa

After two years of experience of conducting war propaganda in the African colonies the MOI undertook a review of the service provided from London. The views of the colonial Information Officers were sought by the Empire Division. As a result of the replies to an MOI questionnaire sent to the colonies in East and Central Africa at the end of 1940 the type and content of propaganda sent to the colonies was adjusted. Greater efforts were made to improve propaganda for the African audiences in East and Central Africa. It was decided that there would be a proportional increase in the amount of pictorial material over printed material sent to Africa in future.<sup>78</sup> Pictorial images could be understood by a greater proportion of Africans than the written word. The African colonial governments thought that they were receiving too much printed material which was not specifically relevant to their individual territories. Press cuttings were received too late to be useful or

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<sup>78</sup> PRO, C0875/9/14, minute by Edmett, 8 December 1941.

topical. Kenya thought that feature articles were too long and out of date on arrival. Kenya and Uganda wanted articles to be more factual and simpler in style. For example, Kenya wanted more articles on weaponry and Nyasaland wanted more articles which would stimulate 'pride in the Empire' and show 'how each colony contributes'. Feature articles were more useful as a basis for radio broadcasts than for the press. Relations with the press were generally good, the Information Officers liaised on a personal basis with individual newspapers and not through press conferences.<sup>79</sup>

There were requests for vernacular translations of illustrated brochures sent to the colonies by the MOI. Pamphlets in the Oxford and Macmillan series were useful not so much for direct propaganda to the Africans but as background for broadcasts. Therefore, more of these were wanted, particularly by Tanganyika. Leaflets were occasionally useful; Northern Rhodesia, Uganda and Zanzibar thought because they often arrived too late to be of great use it would be better if they were produced locally. Weekly War Commentaries produced in London were distributed to the press and formed the basis of leader columns in Uganda and were broadcast direct to the listening public in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>80</sup>

Photographs proved useful not for publication in the press but in making displays. Kenya and Nyasaland wanted more photographs depicting African troops; the point being that 'the native mind is more impressed by numbers than by isolated numbers of the forces'. In general more photographs were required showing the King and Queen, African troops and the colonial war effort.<sup>81</sup>

Some territories received transmissions of the government controlled British Overseas Wireless service. This service operated like the Reuters news agency in that

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<sup>79</sup> PRO, C0875/9/14, replies to circular despatch of 23 December 1940.

<sup>80</sup> ibid.

<sup>81</sup> ibid.



it provided more up-to-date information from London than the colonies received in guidance material from the MOI. The BOW's cables were taken down by Information Officers, were distributed to the press, were used in government publications and formed the basis for public lectures. Similarly, the BBC Empire Service broadcasts were taken down by the Information Officers and used in the same way and even translated into the vernacular to be used in local broadcasts. The BBC Empire Service was considered to be 'by far the most important vehicle for information'.<sup>82</sup> This was important because the BBC provided what was considered objective news and 'their equally powerful, if subtle, propaganda influence is not noticed'.<sup>83</sup>

In printed material produced in London for use in Africa there was an increasing desire for the MOI to send briefer notes. These could then be adapted to meet local requirements by the local Information Officer once it reached Africa who had 'understanding of African sentiment' and 'an eye to translation'. Moreover, there was an increased desire, especially in Tanganyika, for long-term propaganda.<sup>84</sup>

The work undertaken by the Information Officers on their own initiative had also increased in scope and variety. The Information Officers not only undertook the task of explaining the war in East and Central Africa but some also took the opportunity provided by the war to embark on a more positive and long-term propaganda campaign to improve the social and economic welfare of Africans. The adoption of long-term public relations activities was a natural development. As Edmett predicted back in London the staple diet of MOI war propaganda had proved to be limited. Africans needed a few carrots too. Taking the lead offered by the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act the Information Officers found that publicising the new

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<sup>82</sup> ibid.

<sup>83</sup> PRO, C0875/9/14, minute by Edmett 9 July 1941.

<sup>84</sup> PRO, C0875/5/9, EAGC to the Colonial Office, 19 December 1941.

constructive trusteeship policies of the British government offered more fruitful lines of development.

In Kenya, Mervyn Hill, the Information Officer regularly supplied and managed to get published MOI material to the East African Standard, the Mombasa Times, the Sunday Post, the Kenya Weekly News, the Kenya Daily Mail and the African paper, Baraza. He had cooperated in the film War Comes to Kenya which was due for release later in 1941. Each week he arranged for talks to be given covering a wide range of subjects beyond purely war related issues, including why there is a war, how Germany rules, prevention of the plague, grass planting and the value of forests. He also arranged for Africans to speak to fellow Africans, as it was thought that it was more effective if Africans were addressed by their own countrymen in a series of talks on subjects like municipal native affairs, pig keeping and soil erosion. The Indian community was also singled out for special treatment in order to increase their war effort.<sup>85</sup>

A special African section of the Kenyan Information Office was established. It was apparent that the novelty of the war had by this time worn off. The African section had success involving African chiefs. The chiefs were encouraged to give talks on the local radio service which broadcast twice weekly for half an hour in several vernaculars in addition to the daily half hour broadcasts in Swahili at a time convenient to ensure the maximum number of African listeners after they had finished work in the reserves or in towns. As the war zone receded from the African continent, news concerning the war had correspondingly decreased from twenty to eight minutes a day. Therefore, broadcasts concentrated more on general subjects to improve conditions like poultry farming and malaria. Providing entertainment programmes was more difficult as Africans involved at times liked to give 'impromptu' performances making censorship difficult when the Information Officer had little idea of what they were

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<sup>85</sup> PRO, CO875/16/6, Hill's report for March - July 1941.



about to say next.<sup>86</sup> Of course this was the price the Information Officer had to pay for 'cooperation'. African audiences were more likely to understand and respond to broadcasts made by their own chiefs. It also reflected the realities of the situation in Kenya. The colonial government relied on the chiefs as leaders of the Native Authorities to help administer the country. During the war the colonial government relied on both the settler community and the traditional power base in African society represented by the chiefs. This left little room for the educated African elites and revealed the limitations of Indirect Rule unless it could be modernised to incorporate the new political forces.

The African section of the Kenyan Information Office had success in inserting a page of photographs into Baraza every month. Officers on tour from the Information Office also tried to increase sales of Baraza, which it was pointed out, was of course 'in no sense under the control of the Information Office'. The two African papers Dholno and Luhanga were also supplied with weekly news summaries.

During 1941 the mobile cinema van audiences averaged three thousand showing films of the 'loyal propaganda type'. Titles included Royal Review, Empire at Work, and Guns in the Desert. Also shown comic films and films of social and economic benefit. Kenya hoped that in the forthcoming year it would be able to increase its visual work, feeling that the supply of 'suitable' films were probably best made in Africa, as 'many more are needed of an education value'. The section also hoped to expand its activities to telling the European population more about the Africans.<sup>87</sup> Sabine was a 'little concerned' that the Kenyan Information Office seemed to be thinking of making its own films and was not using the output of the Colonial Film Unit.<sup>88</sup> Kenya was therefore informed that the

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<sup>86</sup> PRO, C0875/16/6, report by Davies on the African Section, 12 September 1941.

<sup>87</sup> ibid.

<sup>88</sup> See below.

Colonial Film Unit was to expand its production and warned that any efforts made by Kenya in that respect would probably be merged with the Colonial Film Unit at a later date.<sup>89</sup> On the whole, the Colonial Office accepted the view that 'long-range propaganda material for African consumption could be better done locally'.<sup>90</sup>

A report on public opinion in Northern Rhodesia was critical of the BBC's Empire Service news programmes which indicated that there was a feeling that the white population of Northern Rhodesia was not being told the truth about the war; news about the destruction caused by air raids meant that Britain faced greater military problems than were admitted. Impatience at 'cheap gibes against the Germans' was also apparent. The Information Officer thought that one of the problems was that Northern Rhodesians did not understand that they were not sacrificing their standard of living like the British.<sup>91</sup> The white population in Northern Rhodesia continued to feel that bad news was being suppressed by the BBC and that optimism contained in BBC news broadcasts was premature.<sup>92</sup> The BBC assured the Colonial Office that steps were being taken to guard against this kind of criticism but it had also received conflicting criticism that their reports were 'too gloomy'.<sup>93</sup>

Nyasaland reported that in addition to films received from London they also received films for natives from Johannesburg.<sup>94</sup> The Colonial Film Unit's An African in

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<sup>89</sup> PRO, CO875/16/6, Sabine to Dawe, 29 November 1941; Dawe to Gurney, 15 January 1942.

<sup>90</sup> PRO, CO875/16/6, Dawe to Gurney, 15 January 1942.

<sup>108</sup> PRO, CO875/7/11, report on public opinion in Northern Rhodesia, December 1940.

<sup>92</sup> PRO, CO875/7/11, report from Northern Rhodesia of March 1941.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, CO875/7/11, Barkway to Sabine, 20 June 1941.

<sup>94</sup> PRO, CO875/7/15, Nyasaland report for November 1940.



London received a successful reception.<sup>95</sup> But it was also found that it was difficult to show Africans the British Council newsreel, British News. European clubs would not admit Africans unless they were guaranteed against losses and only if the Africans sat on the floor. Cartoons were required in order to balance the programme for African audiences.<sup>96</sup> The Colonial Office deplored the attitude of the European club owners and could not understand why the Local Committee did not think that British News was not considered suitable for showing to Africans, particularly when it was shown to Africans in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>97</sup> Nyasaland replied that operators had said that British News of inferior quality and unsuited to the tropics<sup>98</sup> but was eventually shown to African audiences by February.<sup>99</sup>

Although the African population enjoyed cartoons, two, The Greeks Had a Word For It and Backs Against the Wall, had been destroyed. Their subject material was considered to be inappropriate because of the small Greek population in Nyasaland and the implication of these cartoons was that Greece would be defeated 'or at any rate lose most of her land'.<sup>100</sup>

In general Nyasaland also wanted more printed material in the vernacular and had cooperated with Northern Rhodesia to produce material in Nyanja. One District Officer complained to the Information Office about the affect on Africans of material from the Bible Society and the Jehovah's Witnesses which, in his view, did more than anything to 'jaundice the outlook of readers'. This District Commissioner, while applauding the African paper

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<sup>95</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, report for Nyasaland for August 1941.

<sup>96</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, report for December 1940.

<sup>97</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, minute by Sabben-Clare, 4 March 1941.

<sup>98</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for January 1941.

<sup>99</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for February 1941.

<sup>100</sup> PRO, C0875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for January 1941.

Nkhani za Nyasa, was convinced that more simple, government-produced books and pamphlets were needed because his ability to travel around his district and direct contact was limited. To this end the Information Office had arranged for the publication of Nkhondo ya Cif Wamba, or The War of Robbery written by an African and published under his own name which explained the war to less educated Africans.<sup>101</sup> Five thousand copies of this pamphlet were distributed and the author wrote a further pamphlet in Nyanja 16 Months of War.<sup>102</sup> A pamphlet in Chinyanja, The British Empire and its Part in the War, was also produced by the Information Office.<sup>103</sup>

In 1941 the main event in Nyasaland was the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of Nyasaland being under formal British protection. Considerable publicity was given to this event in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia as well as in Nyasaland itself.<sup>104</sup> In addition, the message from Lord Moyne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Empire Service of the BBC marking the anniversary was used as an opportunity to pay tribute to Africa's war effort and to reiterate Britain's commitment to the empire demonstrated by the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act and also to restate the reasons why Britain, together with the empire was fighting the war. Moyne reviewed the progress made as a result of British administration in the previous fifty years:

A man may now travel by air and road and rail east and west and north and south throughout Africa. By thus opening up the country we have been able to bring settled administration and justice, besides social services such as health and education. It is an achievement of which we may justly be proud. I say this is in no spirit of complacency. Much remains to be done, but who can deny that materially and spiritually the foundations of a better life have

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<sup>101</sup> PRO, CO875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for December 1940.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, CO875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for January 1941.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, CO875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for March 1941.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, CO875/7/15, report from Nyasaland for May 1941.



already been laid?<sup>105</sup>

It was these kind of benefits the war was being fought to defend, said Moyne, who gave a warning about the dangers of losing the war for,

This war involves the future of Africa as well as of Europe. If the Nazis won, the hope for civilisation in Africa would be at an end and its peoples would be thrown back into slavery under German taskmasters.<sup>106</sup>

Moyne thanked Africans for their war contributions in men, money and produce, urged the African colonies to make an increased war effort and reaffirmed Britain's commitment to welfare and development policies:

War or no war, we cannot allow anything to depress their conditions where they have no luxuries or superfluities to give up. On the contrary, we hope despite the war to do something to raise these conditions. The British Empire must not be deflected from its civilising mission even by the greatest war in history. We intend to go ahead with local manpower and local resources with the policy of development and welfare contained in the Act of Parliament passed last year.<sup>107</sup>

Moyne included a special reference to the officers of the Colonial Civil Service to thank them for their work:

I want to assure you that it is a very real job of war work that you are doing. You are upholding the reputation, the very precious reputation, of the British Empire for enlightened government of its Colonial Empire. That reputation must be maintained.

In conclusion Moyne used Nyasaland to illustrate the theme of the broadcast:

Fifty years ago Nyasaland took as its motto the words 'Light in Darkness'. Nyasaland was then a beacon of civilisation in the darkness of Tropical Africa. Tropical Africa is dark no longer but there is today another kind of darkness brooding not over Africa alone. What Nyasaland was then, the British Empire, in Africa as outside it, is today and will remain for long years to come - a beacon of civilisation throughout the whole world.<sup>108</sup>

The actual situation in Africa was less reassuring

<sup>105</sup> PRO, C0323/1849/7484/1941, transcript of Moyne's broadcast on the BBC's Empire Service, 14 May 1941.

<sup>106</sup> ibid.

<sup>107</sup> ibid.

<sup>108</sup> ibid.

however. In Tanganyika the African population was 'quiet' but in some areas it had been reported that Africans remained 'bewildered by the fact that Europeans who have suppressed inter-tribal war in Africa are unable to settle their own affairs without recourse to arms'. The news in January 1941 of the Greeks repelling the Italians was welcomed but it surprised Africans who were inclined to overestimate Italian prowess. The propagandists, however, were aided in their task by the bad experience of the Italians; 'the unprovoked assault on Abyssinia, the use of mustard gas and other atrocious deeds placed the Italians outside the pale from the African point of view'.<sup>109</sup> In the view of the Information Office, the subsequent news of Allied reverses in North Africa and Crete were borne with fortitude by the Africans who displayed 'no depression and no loss of confidence that everything will come right in the end'.<sup>110</sup>

Relations with the press were good in Tanganyika. The Tanganyika Standard, the leading English language newspaper, cooperated with the government and the editor helped in other areas in support of war charities. By May 1941 the Tanganyika Herald had ceased to exist owing to financial difficulties. A new newspaper, the African Sentinel, had begun production. It was mainly for the Indian population and was supported the Aga Khan. According to the Information Office, it was well-produced and controlled, and gave very staunch support of Britain's policy in India. There was also a growth in vernacular publications. The Information Office's monthly Swahili paper, Mambo Leo, enjoyed increased distribution, particularly among African troops. The Information Office had also begun a newsheet, Habari za Vita, 15,000 copies of each edition were distributed free.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> PRO, CO875/8/5, report from Tanganyika for January 1941.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, CO875/8/5, report from Tanganyika for March-May 1941.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, CO875/8/5, report from Tanganyika for January 1941.



The Information Office's broadcasts from a travelling van in the major centres of Dar-es-Salaam were 'much appreciated' by the population. The van broadcast daily news in Swahili and weekly in both Gujerati and Hindustani. Radio Nairobi was also received in Tanganyika in addition to the BBC Empire Service.<sup>112</sup>

Due to the higher literacy of Africans in Uganda the Information Office concentrated on producing printed material. The Uganda Herald and vernacular newspapers regularly published material supplied by the Information Office. Bi-weekly news summaries were produced in English, Lugandan, Swahili and Acholi and weekly newsletters in English and Lugandan were produced for the troops. In general it was thought by local officers that these news sheets were effective as they were considered to be a 'source of truthful information'.<sup>113</sup>

#### Censorship in Africa

While the Information Officers in the African colonies were engaged in 'positive' propaganda, the colonial governments also engaged in censorship activities and checked the dissemination of anti-British propaganda. As a precaution, Italian missionaries in colonial Africa had been interned, despite continued representations made on their behalf by the Vatican.<sup>114</sup> Of particular concern were the German and Italian broadcasts. The government of Tanganyika was worried about enemy broadcasts in Swahili and Arabic and sought the Colonial Office's advice on a proposed defence regulation which would prohibit listening to enemy broadcasts or broadcasts from enemy-occupied countries in public places. Tanganyika was wary of introducing this regulation as it was aware that 'stress has been laid in Great Britain on the contrast between our

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<sup>112</sup> PRO, CO875/8/5, report from Tanganyika for January 1941.

<sup>113</sup> PRO, CO875/8/9, report from Uganda for 1941.

<sup>114</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/4 and 1824/5. Missionaries were only released from internment camps if they could prove they were anti-Fascist or anti-Nazi.

own willingness to allow enemy broadcasts to be received and the German's unwillingness'.<sup>115</sup>

The Colonial Office discovered that the BBC was unaware of the existence of broadcasts in Swahili and asked Tanganyika to provide further details.<sup>116</sup> While it was recognised that Tanganyika's proposed regulation had no parallel in Britain, it was thought to be warranted because of 'the ignorance of Tanganyikan native listeners'.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Sir Arthur Dawe, thought that because enemy radio propaganda would be intensified in Africa the prohibition should be extended to cover all broadcasts in 'native languages', not merely from enemy and enemy-occupied territories but interestingly from unoccupied France because it was 'under strong enemy influence'.<sup>118</sup> The Colonial Office referred Tanganyika's suggestion to the MOI but they had no objection. Local security considerations took precedence. The Colonial Office approved Tanganyika's proposal and also informed the other East and Central African governments in case they wished to introduce similar regulations.<sup>119</sup>

More controversial was the decision made by Sir John Maybin\*, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia and a former

<sup>115</sup> PRO, CO323/1805/1, Tanganyika to Colonial Office, 7 October 1940. The British public were not prohibited from listening to enemy broadcasts during the war. For example a BBC Listener Research Report of January 1940 found that one out of six adults listened regularly to the broadcasts of Lord Haw-Haw, Balfour, op.cit., p.141. See further PRO, INF1/265 on Lord Haw-Haw's rumours and W.J. West, Truth Betrayed, (London, 1987), chapter 8.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, CO323/1805/1, Colonial Office to Tanganyika, 12 October 1940.

<sup>117</sup> PRO, CO323/1805/1, minute by Sabben-Clare, 18 October 1940.

<sup>118</sup> PRO, CO323/1805/1, minute by Dawe, 24 October 1940, emphasis added. The telegrams were sent to the 'Morton Committee' on Foreign (Allied) Resistance. For details on the Morton Committee see further PRO, T160/1056/F17878, unfortunately the majority of the papers and discussions of this committee remain closed.

<sup>119</sup> PRO, CO323/1805/1, Hodson to Sabine, 4 November 1940; Colonial Office to Tanganyika, 6 November 1940; Colonial Office to EAGC, 6 November 1940.



Police Magistrate in Ceylon, to ban the Watch Tower Society (the Jehovah Witnesses) on the grounds of sedition. Their literature, including bibles and hymn books, had already been confiscated. The Colonial Office received complaints from the Society protesting against the ban. It was noted by the Colonial Office that the Society had not been banned in Britain because conscientious objection to the war on religious grounds was recognised. Furthermore, there was no evidence that the Society held pro-Nazi sympathies. As one Colonial Office official remarked, 'a religious movement cannot be suppressed without resorting to torture and the stake'.<sup>120</sup> It was also noted, however, that the findings of the Commission of Enquiry into the Copper Belt disturbances in 1935 described the Society as 'dangerously subversive' and that it had been 'an important cause' of the disturbances.<sup>121</sup>

Northern Rhodesia was asked to make a full report. Following the death of Maybin, the Acting Governor of Northern Rhodesia explained that the Society's publications contained passages 'apparently attacking all recognised authority in the form of secular governments and also recognised religions, in particular the Roman Catholic Church'. These attacks were thought 'likely to have a deleterious effect upon the untutored minds of Africans'. Moreover the Society's activities were having a 'considerably adverse influence upon the successful recruitment of African soldiers'. The Northern Rhodesia government accused the Society of spreading the following rumours:

(a) all natives will be called upon to join the forces and even be forced to join by the police, and that only those shall be free from service who have a certificate from the Society's European representative at Lusaka.

(b) if the Germans become rulers of the country all taxes will be done away with and the land at present held by Europeans will be given to the Africans and better education will be provided for their children.

(c) if the Germans win all Africans will be allowed to

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<sup>120</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/7, minutes by Calder, 24 January and 1 March 1941.

<sup>121</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/7, minute by Lambert, 8 March 1941.

rule themselves as the American negroes do now.

(d) the Chiefs are evil and working for government money and they will be destroyed when Christ returns to earth.

(e) the Government fears to suppress the Watch Tower preachers.<sup>122</sup>

The controversy, however, did not end there. Two Africans, Gibson Chembe and Lamond Kandama, had been arrested and imprisoned for refusing to burn their Watch Tower publications. The Superintendent of the prison, Nissen, and the local Magistrate, Rawstone, had ordered them to be publicly flogged for this refusal. Although the local District Commissioner had condemned the action as 'unwise', the Northern Rhodesia government insisted on describing what had occurred as repression and not as persecution. This incident created consternation in the Colonial Office. Sir Grattan Bushe\*, the Colonial Office's legal advisor and subsequent Governor of Barbados, thought their punishment had been 'illegal' and that Rawstone was 'unfit to exercise magisterial powers'. Bushe concluded that, 'it is an episode which I should not have thought possible under British administration'.<sup>123</sup> Harold Beckett, Assistant Secretary in the East African Department was equally outraged. He commented that 'we do not seem to have advanced much since the days of the early Roman Empire'. Moreover, Beckett feared the problem was even more deep-rooted than this incident would suggest:

Now if Mr. Rawstone and Mr. Nissen were the only officials in Northern Rhodesia who were blind to the lessons of history in the matter of religious persecution the remedy would be quite simple. They would be sacked for incompetence: and a purged, enlightened civil service would get on very well without them. Unfortunately I see no reason to suppose that they are anything but typical.

The Northern Rhodesian government was now caught between Scylla and Charybdis, either 'backing down' or 'martyrizing' Watch Tower Society followers. If Rawstone was sacked he in turn would become a 'martyr' in the eyes of other officers in the Colonial Service and the Society

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<sup>122</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/9, Logan to Moyne, 28 April 1941.

<sup>123</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/9, minute by Bushe, 5 July 1941.



would 'gain face to an amazing extent'. He recommended that the two offending officers should be at least told of the Secretary of State for the Colonies's 'grave displeasure'.<sup>124</sup>

The question became what action the Colonial Office should take next. Proposals to give publicity to the Secretary of State's displeasure were rejected as there would be enough local publicity about the incident and it was thought that it was 'not necessary to go out of our way to pillory the officers concerned'.<sup>125</sup> Therefore Lord Moyne wrote to the ex-Governor of Barbados, the new Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Sir John Waddington\*, in the strongest terms saying that what he found 'particularly disquieting' about this incident was

that both the Commissioner and the Acting Governor himself seem to have looked at the affair from the purely administrative angle and gave no indication that the procedure adopted amounted to nothing less than a flagrant case of religious persecution. There can be no excuse for ordering men to burn with their own hands books which in their eyes are sacred. If this is the attitude of the men at the top, what can we expect from their subordinates? ... your recent arrival in the Colony will I hope give you an opportunity to make it clearly understood that neither you nor I will stand for religious persecution in any territory for which His Majesty's Government is responsible.<sup>126</sup>

#### Broadcasting in Africa

In addition to the Empire Service of the BBC, local government broadcasting to the Africans became a more important part of the propaganda effort in the African colonies. As the war progressed, it assumed a greater priority in propaganda activities than had been first projected when the initial plans for propaganda in Africa had been drawn up in 1939. On the basis of experimental broadcasts in Uganda undertaken in 1939 it was seen that 'the African takes to broadcasting as a duck takes to

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<sup>124</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/9, minute by Beckett, 30 July 1941.

<sup>125</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/9, minute by Beckett, 31 July 1941.

<sup>126</sup> PRO, CO323/1824/9, Moyne to Waddington, 8 October 1941.

water'.<sup>127</sup> This was hardly surprising given the oral tradition in African societies.

In Kenya broadcasting to the Africans was seen as a 'one of the most important functions of the Information Office'. Its aim was to provide 'accurate and comprehensive news of the war'. A Broadcasting Committee had been established which ensured that the African was given a balanced programme of listening consisting of half news and half entertainment. The Cable and Wireless owned medium and short wave station, Radio Nairobi, served beyond Kenya to the region as a whole, broadcast six times a week in five vernaculars, Swahili, Kikuyu, Likamba, Dhoulo and Hindustani. A typical programme consisted of fifteen minutes of news, a ten minute talk and five minutes of songs.<sup>128</sup>

During the May 1941 conference of Information Officers from both East and Central Africa which was held in Nairobi steps were discussed to improve broadcasts. It was agreed that a wider range of programmes would be made and that there would be a greater inter-change of material between the Information Officers and Nairobi to ensure each territory had its particular colony represented in the output.<sup>129</sup>

The BBC was also anxious to improve its service to the colonies. The Colonial Office asked the Information Officers to provide information which would help to ensure that the colonies were listening on the correct wavelengths and to find out what, if anything, was being done by way of advance programme information.<sup>130</sup> Following the 1941 BBC plan to combine the Empire and Foreign Services to produce a general Overseas Service the BBC was thinking about

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<sup>127</sup> PRO, CO875/11/1, minute by Edmett, 6 August 1941.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, CO875/2/1 Kenya to Colonial Office, 28 January 1941; PRO, CO875/4/17, Latham to Smith, July 1942.

<sup>129</sup> PRO, CO875/2/14, record of a meeting of the sub-committee of the conference of information officers to consider broadcasting policy and practice, May 1941.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, CO875/3/3, circular despatch to all colonies, 19 April 1941.



expanding its activity in Africa so that the new World Service would carry broadcasts in vernacular languages and specially adapted programmes to serve regional audiences. The BBC therefore wanted to send three representatives to Africa to gather information about what kind of service the colonies would require.<sup>131</sup> While the East African governments did not object to a visit by BBC representatives, the desirability of the BBC engaging in vernacular broadcasts from London was questioned. The BBC wanted to begin to broadcast a weekly vernacular newsletter in Swahili to East Africa.<sup>132</sup> The East African governments and Northern Rhodesia had two objections to this proposal. First, they thought that those who had responsibility for those programmes should be in direct contact with Africans and second, they questioned the desirability of broadcasting in Swahili as there was no one single vernacular covering the region.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the BBC wanted to proceed. They proposed a weekly broadcast of fourteen minutes by the MOI's Sir Herbert Scott, former Director of Education in Kenya. He would not, the BBC assured the Colonial Office, tread on dangerous ground and would give background information and explanations which would be easily understood by the African.<sup>134</sup> The mere mention of Scott's name, however, was 'like a red rag to a bull' as far as the Governor of Kenya, Sir Henry Moore, was concerned.<sup>135</sup> In any case, Radio Nairobi was already broadcasting in the vernacular and in more languages than just Swahili. Also as the war zone had receded from Kenya the interest of the African's in war news had decreased.

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<sup>131</sup> PRO, CO875/3/7, OEPEC paper no. 735, 'BBC Empire and USA Intelligence Service', 7 April 1941; circular despatch to all colonies, 3 May 1941.

<sup>132</sup> PRO, CO875/3/6, Grenfell Williams to Sabine, 20 January 1941.

<sup>133</sup> PRO, CO875/3/6, EAGC to Colonial Office 23 March 1941; EAGC to Colonial Office, 25 March 1941.

<sup>134</sup> PRO, CO875/3/6, Grenfell Williams to Sabben-Clare, 25 April 1941.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, CO875/3/6, Dawe to Shuckburgh, 9 May 1941.

Radio Nairobi was now adding a greater general talk and entertainment content to their broadcasts. From Kenya's experience it was thought that they, and not the BBC, should continue to provide vernacular broadcasts to Africans as it now formed part of its efforts to educate Africans which they wanted to continue. Indeed, it was even thought that it would be dangerous to reverse this development after the war ended.<sup>136</sup> The BBC did not mean to criticise the local Information Officers but thought the BBC was more experienced and could provide better news summaries. A further warning was added that if great strides were not taken during the war, the colonies may be missing their chance.<sup>137</sup>

#### Film Propaganda

As with broadcasting the value of film as a suitable medium of propaganda for African audiences was increasingly recognised. Films were judged to be popular with African audiences, particularly the British Council's newsreel compilation British News and MOI documentaries. The British Council was not active in the African colonies during the war beyond providing bursaries to enable colonial students to study in Britain and distributing cultural and instructional 35mm. sound shorts. The British Council's primary contribution was the service it provided in arranging from June 1940 for the distribution of the newsreel, British News, which had first been made for the British exhibit at the New York World's Fair. The British Council produced British News on an 'agency basis' for the MOI and Colonial Office, which was sent to 28 colonies a week and cost seven hundred pounds. This newsreel was composed of extracts from the five British newsreel companies in cooperation with the Newsreel Association of Great Britain and was highly regarded in London not least

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<sup>136</sup> PRO, C0875/3/6, Prof. W.M. MacMillan, 'Broadcasting in Kenya', 4 December 1941.

<sup>137</sup> PRO, C0875/3/6, Macmillan BBC to Colonial Office, 9 December 1941.



because it was the only completely British newsreel.<sup>138</sup> This was important given the dominance of foreign and American films in particular in the African market.

The showing of films, however, was hampered by the lack of provision for theatrical display, by the difficulty in reaching the widely scattered populations and by delays in shipping films to Africa. There were nine cinemas in Kenya, two in Uganda, four in Zanzibar, three in Nyasaland, three in Tanganyika, and eight for Europeans and nine for Africans in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>139</sup>

One of the important lessons learned by London about the kind of films that they were sending to the African colonies was that while the European communities were well served by the same kind of films shown to the audiences at home, the African needed more specialised treatment. Already Information Officers substituted the English soundtracks with commentaries in the regional vernaculars. It was also a common view that 'a modern film' was 'much too fast for unsophisticated audiences'.<sup>140</sup>

The British Film Institute wanted to apply for a grant of fifteen thousand pounds under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to carry out simultaneous investigations in Malaya, the West Indies as well as East and West Africa into 'the use of films among the native races' and to make 'effective recommendations for its development, in conjunction with the press and wireless'.<sup>141</sup> The Colonial Office was not altogether impressed with the BFI's proposal. While it was recognised that some form of

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<sup>138</sup> PRO, C0859/80/20, British Council's summary of activities in the colonies, 28 March 1941; PRO, BW4/1, A.J.S. White to Randall, 19 August 1940. On the British Council and film activities in the colonies see PRO, C0875/17/1, 'Note on the British Council Film Activities', unsigned and undated. On distribution of 'British News' in the Colonies see BW4/11 and BW4/12.

<sup>139</sup> PRO, C0875/9/14, replies to circular despatch of 23 December 1940.

<sup>140</sup> PRO, C0875/9/14, minute by Edmett, 9 July 1941.

<sup>141</sup> PRO, C0859/46/10, Capt. Sir William Brass (Chairman of the BFI) to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 July 1941.

investigation would be useful it was suggested that such an investigation could be undertaken by Colonial Service officers in the field. Moreover, it was noted that relations between the BFI and MOI were not congenial because of rivalry of production of instructional films; 'Mr Bell [the Secretary of the BFI] did not by any means see eye to eye with the Films Division of the MOI'.<sup>142</sup> Sir Charles Jeffries thought that the proposal was important but not a priority and did not want the Colonial Office to be rushed into a decision.<sup>143</sup>

The BFI was told that its application would be deferred not only because of the procedure for consideration of their application but also because the Colonial Office wanted to examine the information it had received from the colonies about the reaction of 'natives' to films.<sup>144</sup> Undeterred the BFI returned to the charge and revived their application for the grant. They noted that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Cranborne, had referred to the value of film for colonial audiences in a speech in the House of Lords. Indeed, the BFI argued that they could provide 'more information about films than any other body in the world'.<sup>145</sup>

By this time events had overtaken the ambitions of the BFI as the Colonial Office and the MOI had cooperated to establish a central organisation: the Colonial Film Unit. In order to meet the specialised requirements of African audiences the Colonial Film Unit had been established in October 1939 under William Sellers\* at the GPO unit as part of the Film Division of the MOI.<sup>146</sup>

Sellers had been seconded from Nigeria where he had run a rural health propaganda unit and undertook and was a pioneer in this field. Sellers had toured all around

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<sup>142</sup> PRO, CO859/46/10, minute by Paskin, 14 August 1941.

<sup>143</sup> PRO, CO859/46/10, minute by Jeffries, 6 November 1941.

<sup>144</sup> PRO, CO859/46/10, Paskin to Brass, 17 January 1942.

<sup>145</sup> PRO, CO859/46/10, Brass to Stanley, 17 December 1942.

<sup>146</sup> PRO, INF1/30, Waterfield to the DG MOI, 10 November 1939.



Nigeria in a travelling cinema van. The Colonial Office considered his work 'excellent'.<sup>147</sup>

The initial aim of the Colonial Film Unit had been to produce propaganda films of the 'projection of Britain' type suitable for unsophisticated African audiences. The Colonial Film Unit worked in cooperation with the GPO film unit of the MOI which provided technical staff when required.<sup>148</sup> George Pearson who had experience making films for Africans joined the unit in April 1940. Early work consisted of making silent versions of MOI shorts.<sup>149</sup>

When the GPO unit moved to Pinewood in March 1941, the Colonial Film Unit remained at Soho Square. The Colonial Office had wanted the Colonial Film Unit to remain at Soho Square in order to ensure the continuation of close consultation with the Colonial Office in Whitehall. Furthermore, it was thought that the Colonial Film Unit needed to be located in central London to be near Aggrey House, the residence of African students studying in London who might be called upon to act as extras in films made by the unit.<sup>150</sup>

In 1941 Sellers sought complete separation from the GPO unit (now the Crown Film Unit). Sellers argued that

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<sup>147</sup> PRO, CO323/1651/19, Eastwood to Wace, 21 June 1939. Before the war Eastwood, head of the General Department, recommended Sellers to the BBC as a suitable person to broadcast on colonial affairs, but added 'he is, I think of quite humble origin and his accent may not be all that it should be'.

<sup>148</sup> PRO, INF1/30. Sellers was responsible to the Director of the Films Division who were until December 1939, Joseph Ball, until June 1940, Kenneth Clark and from June 1940 was Jack Beddington. For the GPO Unit see further, Ian Dalrymple, 'The Crown Film Unit, 1940-43', in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring, (eds.), Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45, (London, 1982).

<sup>149</sup> PRO, INF1/57, memorandum by Fletcher, 26 July 1940; MOI films converted into silent films by the Colonial Film Unit included: Shipbuilders, Into the Blue, Silage, War and Order, Kill that Rat, How to Dig, Food Convoy, Salute to Farmers, Atlantic Patrol, Dig for Victory, Sowing and Planting, Hints on Gardening, Minelayers, Empire's new Armies and RAF in Action.

<sup>150</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Sellers to Mercier, 23 April 1941.

the production of films for Africans should not be mere amateurish versions of films made for European audiences but should be specially produced for Africans.<sup>151</sup> The Colonial Office supported this development<sup>152</sup> not least because of the public relations benefits of establishing a distinctly recognisable output of films for the African colonies under the Colonial Film Unit label. Indeed the Secretary of State for the Colonies viewed some films produced by the Colonial Film Unit and was impressed by what he saw.<sup>153</sup> Sellers desire to make specialised films for Africans was mirrored by the increased demand from Africa for specially produced films, particularly for African troops. A compromise was reached whereby the MOI agreed that the staff of the Colonial Film Unit would be increased, in practice separate from the Crown Film Unit in all but accounts.<sup>154</sup>

Colonial Film Unit activities expanded throughout 1941. The Colonial Film Unit adapted films held in the Central Film Library for colonial purposes as it was found that there was a three fold greater demand for silent, rather than sound films. By 1942 the Colonial Film Unit was producing more films than the Crown Film Unit and had a production programme of fifty films a year. In addition to this activity, the Colonial Film unit had begun to produce a fortnightly newsreel called African News Film. This newsreel was a compilation which was made by editing existing stock and material given to the Films Division by newsreel companies.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Sellers to Mercier, 25 May 1941.

<sup>152</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Sabine to Harlow, 7 May 1941.

<sup>153</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Moyne to Monckton, 7 May 1941.

<sup>154</sup> PRO, INF1/144, minute by Fletcher, 5 June 1941.

<sup>155</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Campbell to Steele, 15 January 1942. By February 1942 the following films had been completed by the Colonial Film Unit: Mr. English at Home, The British Army, The RAF, English and African Life, THE Story of Cotton, Guns in the Desert, Progress in the Colonies, An African in London, This is a Searchlight, This is a Special Constable, Africans' War Effort, This is a



The Colonial Film Unit also received demands for a different kind of film to be produced other than merely war propaganda and background films about Britain. For example, although the Mombasa Times in Nairobi applauded the films shown by Kenya's travelling cinema van for sounding the right 'patriotic note', the Information Officer in Kenya showed films which portrayed not only war propaganda films, but also those which depicted social welfare subjects which would have a more long term educative role helping the African in every day problems such as dealing with soil erosion.<sup>156</sup>

The Colonial Office supported these views and proposed that the activities of the Colonial Film Unit should be extended into a second unit which would be able to make films 'to show now and build up for peacetime showing to backward audiences a library of films that are not war propaganda'. Mercier of the Films Division of the MOI agreed with the Colonial Office point of view which argued that:

- a) the value of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction to backward audiences has been proved conclusively;
- b) there is a danger in soaking native audiences, as at present, in war propaganda designed to show the might of the British and her Allies when the news has nothing to show but setbacks; and
- c) when peace returns and war propaganda films are useless, the elaborate organisation for display will come to an abrupt stop.<sup>157</sup>

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Barrage Balloon, These are Paratroopers, This is an ARP Warden, This is an Anti-Aircraft Gun, Our Indian Soldiers, Self Help in Food, These are London Firemen, Gold Coast Timber, Mobile Canteens, With Our African Troops (Early Training), With Our African Troops (On Active Service), Soldiers' Comforts from Nigeria, These Are British Soldiers, Bren Gun Carriers and Tanks, Harvest Festival, Barbados Day in Portsmouth, Uganda Police, These Are ATS and WRNS, Feeding the Army, Alakiji, Honduras Record, Home Guard, Training the Blind, and Air Raid Precautions, ibid., Sabine to Beddington, 11 February 1942.

<sup>156</sup> PRO, CO875/6/18, report for December 1940 - March 1941.

<sup>157</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Mercier to Beddington and Lord Dufferin, 6 February 1942.

In fact the Colonial Film Unit was already making background films 'to show the African what references to Britain, of which he knows nothing, really mean, e.g. that in the United Kingdom there is a counterpart to his life in Africa'.<sup>158</sup>

In addition to the increased terms of reference for the films which the Colonial Film Unit would produce, Sellers, sensible to the need to cut down on costs, also wanted to encourage amateur film makers in the Colonial Service to shoot material with raw stock provided by the Colonial Film Unit and send it to London for editing by the Unit. To ensure that the highest possible standard of material was shot he recommended that the Colonial Film Unit should institute a course of instruction for visiting officers from the colonies home on leave. Further technical support and information about films in production would be given to those interested by subscribing to a proposed monthly bulletin, Colonial Cinema. The stock of existing film libraries would also be examined to discover if any could be 'made suitable' for colonial audiences. Although there was increasing interest in Britain in the Colonial Film Unit's output and suggestions that in view of their simple technique the material would be suitable to instruct children in schools, Sellers did not wish to see the films made for Africans being shown to children without substantial re-adjustments. In view of the programme he proposed he did not think there would be enough time to adapt films for Africans to be shown to British schoolchildren. Film output would also be increased under the new terms of reference from 52 to 100 a year.<sup>159</sup> The Colonial Office strongly supported Seller's recommendations and that he should be given a staff increase.<sup>160</sup>

The Treasury had initial doubts that such an extension of the Colonial Film Unit's activities could be undertaken

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<sup>158</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Cameron to Lord Dufferin, 12 March 1942.

<sup>159</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Memorandum by Sellers, 3 March 1942.

<sup>160</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Sidebotham to DG MOI, 15 May 1942.



in the middle of the war. Ultimately the Treasury authorised the additional expenditure because the proposals were 'in line' with the Government's new development policy, but only on condition that they did 'not conflict with war-time activities proper of a short-term nature and more immediately important'. Furthermore, it had to be acknowledged by the Films Division of the MOI that the proposed work would have a 'low priority' of future war-time allocation of extra technical staff and accommodation.<sup>161</sup>

At home, audiences were shown the film Men of Africa which had been produced before the war by Strand films for the Colonial Empire Marketing Board for display at the New York World's Fair. The MOI obtained film footage discarded by Strand from the finished film which was later used by the Colonial Film Unit to produce films for Africans. Seventy five cans were delivered by Strand to the MOI by the beginning of 1945.<sup>162</sup> This film showed the audiences the benefit of British rule in Africa in the context of British colonial policy of development and welfare paid for by the British taxpayer. This was, as the narrator explained, 'striking proof that even in the midst of war, Great Britain does not shirk her responsibilities to the Colonies'. The British in Africa had brought 'peace' where there had once been a life of 'fear and uncertainty' for the African. There was still a 'long battle to be fought with ignorance, poverty and disease' but much could be achieved with the money and 'the initiative of the white man'. The rest of the film showed the practical steps already undertaken by the British in the health, education and agricultural fields and the steps being taken to give responsibilities of local government to the Africans.<sup>163</sup>

The British Council indicated that they would be

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<sup>161</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Tucker to Welch, 18 June 1942.

<sup>162</sup> PRO, INF1/200, Anderson to Gardiner, 16 January 1945.

<sup>163</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, 'Movies and Mandarins: the Official Film and British Colonial Africa', in James Curren and Vincent Porter (eds.) British Cinema History, (New Jersey, 1983), p.132.

interested in making a documentary film about empire 'solidarity' in conjunction with Louis Jackson the principal of British National Films and Anglo-American Distributors.<sup>164</sup> While the Colonial Office thought that the newsreel, British News was 'excellent', doubts were expressed about the value of the British Council's instructional and cultural shorts which were 'intelligible only to the highly educated and sophisticated with a good background of world knowledge and of knowledge of Britain in particular'. Moreover the Colonial Office was aware that there existed 'very considerable feeling' between the MOI's Films Division and the British Council which make cooperation on colonial films difficult.<sup>165</sup> Indeed the MOI had an 'uneasy' relationship with the British Council and saw no reason for the Council to expand its activities in the colonial field, particularly as there was no European rival to British culture in the empire in Africa.<sup>166</sup>

Apart from the work of the Colonial Film Unit and its work for African audiences, the Colonial Office sought to cooperate further with the Films Division of the MOI to produce more films about the colonies. This would include all types of film produced by the MOI, including: feature films, theatrical shorts, MOI five minute propaganda films. The Colonial Office hoped that the Films Division would be able to send a film unit out to the colonies to film footage for these types of films. Sabine was encouraged that Jack Beddington\*, former head of publicity at Shell-Mex and B.P., director of the MOI's Films Division, had given the impression of 'being interested in the subject of

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<sup>164</sup> PRO, C0875/17/1, Kearney to Sabine, 5 January 1942.

<sup>165</sup> PRO, C0875/17/1, 'Note on British Council Film Activities', unsigned and undated; Sabine to Sidebotham, 21 January 1942. For the problems between the MOI and the British Council see A.J.S. White, The British Council: the First 25 Year, 1934 1959, (London, 1965), Chapter 3.

<sup>166</sup> PRO, INF1/444, Hodson to DG, 30 September 1940.



colonial films'.<sup>167</sup>

Sabine had for along time been keen to 'bring the Colonial Empire to everyone's notice by the really popular media' which would reach a larger audience than radio talks, pamphlets and posters.<sup>168</sup> As a result of discussions between the MOI and the Colonial Office, the Films Division employed the author and BBC film critic Mrs. Arnot Robertson\*, to write 'suitable material to make scripts on colonial subjects'. She came up with several ideas for both shorts and feature films. Her ideas for feature films included 'Hail, the Conquering Hero Goes' about the Zulus, 'Obeah' about Jamaica, 'White Ants' about witchcraft and an idea for a film about the life of the explorer Mary Kingsley. Her ideas for shorts included 'Tuppence Coloured' about trades unions in West Africa, 'Cost of a Road' and one on 'Colonial Administration'.<sup>169</sup>

Robertson's suggestions were circulated to the regional specialists in the Colonial Office for their comments. Their reactions were not encouraging. Her ideas were criticised on the grounds that the resulting films would give an inaccurate picture of conditions in the colonies. The reactions also showed a prejudice against the 'movies' in general. For example, one official commented 'I regard all this kind of thing with extreme distaste, but then I have never really liked the pictures'.<sup>170</sup> Sabine, however, encouraged Robertson to continue working on her ideas, but it was not until later in the war that this cooperation produced tangible results: a feature film, Men of Two Worlds which would at last give the colonial empire the kind of exposure Sabine had worked

<sup>167</sup> PRO, CO875/17/1, minutes of a meeting with the MOI, 7 January 1942; Sabine to Sidebotham, 12 January 1942.

<sup>168</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, confidential note by Sabine, undated.

<sup>169</sup> PRO, CO875/17/1, minute by Sabine, 17 February 1942 and Beddington's 'Memorandum on Colonial Film Material', 14 April 1942.

<sup>170</sup> PRO, CO875/17/1, minute by Hibbert, 2 June 1942.

towards.<sup>171</sup>

As we have seen in the developments in propaganda in East and Central Africa and in the work of the Colonial Film Unit there was an implicit agreement with Edmett's warning that the MOI's war propaganda would not 'win the peace'. The war provided the opportunity to expand colonial public relations activities, looking to the long-term and beyond the requirements of winning the war. In practice a more forward propaganda policy had been adopted in the colonies which would look to the future relationship between Britain and her colonies centering on the new policy of Colonial Development and Welfare.

By the end of 1941 the MOI caught up with these developments. Weekly meetings between the MOI and Colonial Office were also instituted in order to improve the relationship between the two departments. The Colonial Office would take a greater responsibility in initiating propaganda and overseeing its despatch. The propaganda specialists would bring in regional specialists from within the Colonial Office to sit in on discussions where necessary. It was also decided that material produced would come under one of two categories, first, general material about the progress of the war, and second, material of special interest to the colonies. Two themes would be particularly highlighted, the practical affect of the British government's policy on the colonies and material which showed that 'what the colonies were doing in the war was appreciated here'.<sup>172</sup> A more concerted effort was made to publicise the British empire to the British population, long-term public relations, with the aim of getting the public to understand the responsibilities they had towards the colonies which would continue after the war was over. This meant a widening of the terms of reference to include a long-term propaganda educative effort beyond telling the British public about the contributions made by

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<sup>171</sup> C.f. chapter six.

<sup>172</sup> PRO, CO875/5/6, minute by Sabine on meeting 8 October 1941; circular no. 277, 13 November 1941.



the colonies to the war effort.<sup>173</sup>

What is striking is the apparent confidence that it would be business as usual in the empire in the post-war period. In spite of the military setbacks of 1941 it is clear that the propagandists in the Colonial Office and in the colonies were not disheartened but were anxious to seize the initiative and attempt to win the peace while the war was still being fought. The impact of Pearl Harbour and the collapse of British power in East Asia seemed to endorse the need for a positive propaganda policy and served to consolidate efforts into a coordinated campaign around a new theme of 'partnership'.

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<sup>173</sup> PRO, CO875/11/20, meeting 6 October 1941.

## CHAPTER FOUR

FROM 'TRUSTEESHIP' TO 'PARTNERSHIP'  
COLONIAL DECLARATIONS

The MOI-Colonial Office agreement on the incorporation of long-term propaganda was not implemented immediately. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the entrance of the United States into the war on the side of the Allies in December 1941 and the collapse of British power in South East Asia in February 1942 transformed the context in which colonial propaganda was conducted. The British government tried to make sense of the devastating events in South-East Asia and the impact on British prestige and status as a world power. But this was not to be a review behind the safety of closed doors. British colonial policy was subjected to a barrage of criticism at home and abroad. Demands were made for a new statement on war aims about the British empire. The air was alive with the talk of charters. Both the Labour Party and the American administration demanded a 'Colonial Charter', a statement of principles about the British empire.

For nearly two years after Singapore the Colonial Office fought off attempts to produce an all-embracing statement on British colonial policy. The Colonial Office opposed the idea of any statement which did not take into account the diversity of the dependent empire, forcing the pace of political progress in the colonies beyond which their social and economic structures could support. The Colonial Office refused to let public relations and the appeasement of critics dominate the consideration of such fundamental questions of imperial policy. This is not to argue that the Colonial Office drew no lessons from events in South-East Asia. Nor was the idea of a re-statement of Britain's colonial mission dismissed out of hand. What is clear, however, is that the Colonial Office worked hard to retain the initiative and to articulate British colonial policy in a way which, in their view, was a true reflection of reality. As will be seen that while there was frustration that the new agreed policy to conduct long-term propaganda about the empire was put on hold, this was, paradoxically to the benefit of the colonial propagandists.



The conduct of policy at the high and international level resulted in a statement by Oliver Stanley in July 1943. Old-fashioned 'trusteeship' was replaced with modern 'partnership' and the full implications of the new Colonial Development and Welfare policy were embraced. As a result, the new principle of 'partnership' provided a new theme for colonial propaganda and gave ample scope for the colonial propagandists and their long-term propaganda campaign, who were reinvigorated with a new sense of mission.

Following the entrance of the United States into the war ultimate victory was assured. It appeared the Colonial Office could devote more energy to the task of planning post-war reconstruction. This optimism was short-lived. Shortly before the setbacks in South-East Asia a warning had been made that colonial propaganda should become more forward-looking and positive:

The British Empire, like Queen Elizabeth, has solved most of its problems by a system of peaceful procrastination. This formula does not always stand the test of events when the pace of human progress is accelerating.<sup>1</sup>

The fall of Singapore was considered 'the worst moment for the Colonial Office' during the war.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the Colonial Office's desire to view the South-East Asian setback as a purely military defeat, the unwillingness of the colonial peoples to come to the aid of Britain was perceived as a failure of British colonial administration and had major implications for the future of the empire as a whole. The events in South-East Asia produced a period of introspection when fundamental questions were asked about Britain's colonial policy of trusteeship.

Events in South-East Asia could not have come at a worst time for the colonial propagandists. Just when the

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<sup>1</sup> PRO, CO875/11/1, minute by Edmett, 30 December 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Lee and Petter, *op.cit.*, p.121. The political scene at home was also troubled with dissatisfaction with Churchill's refusal to create an independent minister of defence. These domestic difficulties continued until November with the victory at El Alamein. Churchill had called and won a votes of confidence on 29 January and 2 July. A.J.P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-1945*, (London, 1979)pp. 658 and 673.

MOI and the Colonial Office had at last agreed to supplement the war propaganda diet by embarking on long-term educative propaganda about the nature and purpose of Britain's colonial policy, the collapse of British power in South-East Asia placed British colonial policy under the spotlight of public scrutiny. The Colonial Office was on the defensive as never before. The fall of Singapore exposed the weakness of the empire unity theme and the claims about the spontaneous contribution of the colonies to the war effort. Singapore also seemed to vindicate the arguments made by Edmett and Sabine in favour of colonial propaganda in support of Britain's forward constructive colonial policy. Lord Listowel\*, the Labour peer and Party Whip in the House of Lords and later Secretary of State for India and Burma and Minister of State at the Colonial Office in the post-war Labour government, was certain that new efforts had to be made in the colonial propaganda field to 'arm' the 'minds' of colonial peoples 'as well as their bodies'. He called for a re-articulation of Britain's colonial policy, for a Colonial Charter, which would contain a statement of war aims about the empire. Hitherto, he argued, colonial propaganda had missed the mark:

It is not enough to point out that if the British Commonwealth is defeated they will become enslaved by the strongest Axis Power. They cannot be certain that this is a black as well as a white man's war unless they can be persuaded beyond all doubt that the peace which follows it will be a black as well as a white man's peace.<sup>3</sup>

Critics, not least those in the United States, called for a new beginning. Any remaining vestiges of British complacency about its empire had been shattered. The age of imperialism was dead it was declared, and the possibility of the liquidation of the European empires was on the international political agenda.

In German broadcasts the loss of Singapore was 'compared and contrasted with Dunkirk'. The Germans emphasised that it was a mistake 'for the British to point out that they often lose the early battles in war but win

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<sup>3</sup> Hansard, 20 May 1942, vol. 122, col.1088.



the last one. The eclipse of the British Empire was inevitable, part of an inexorable historical process'.<sup>4</sup>

Churchill, on the other hand, tried to draw strength, unity and faith in eventual victory from the disasters in South-East Asia, broadcasting to the nation on 15 February:

This ... is one of those moments when the British race and nation can show their quality and their genius. This is one of those moments when it can draw from the heart of misfortune the vital impulses of victory. Here is the moment to display that calm and poise combined with grim determination which not so long ago brought us out of the very jaws of death. Here is another occasion to show - as so often in our long story - that we can meet reverses with dignity and with renewed accessions of strength.

He reminded his audience that they also had the reserves of their new Allies to call upon:

We must remember that we are no longer alone. We are in the midst of a great company. Three-quarters of the human race are now moving with us. The whole future of mankind may depend upon our action and upon our conduct. So far we have not failed. We shall not fail now. Let us move forward steadfastly together into the storm and through the storm.<sup>5</sup>

According to Harold Nicolson this broadcast was not a success, 'the country is too nervous and irritable to be fobbed off with fine phrases'.<sup>6</sup> Indeed only 65.4% of the potential radio audience listened to Churchill (compared to 77% in 1941, 71.3% on VE Day and 81.3% on D Day). Of this 65.4% he only achieved a 62% approval rating, which was 'low for Winston'. A social worker in Leeds noted that this was the first broadcast by Churchill which had 'failed to convince and inspire'.<sup>7</sup>

Criticism was even articulated in The Times, usually a staunch supporter of Britain's colonial policy. A leader of the 14 March expressed the feeling that some of the

<sup>4</sup> Briggs, The War of Words ..., p.409.

<sup>5</sup> Churchill quoted in Martin Gilbert, Road to Victory: Winston S. Churchill, 1941-1945 (London, 1986), pp. 58-9.

<sup>6</sup> ibid., p.59.

<sup>7</sup> D.J. Wenden, 'Churchill, Radio and Cinema', in Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.) Churchill (Oxford, 1993), p.224.

lessons in colonial government as a result of the East Asian setbacks were so grave immediate action was necessary:

The defect of the British colonial system, and the essence of the challenge which it has to meet, is that it has been too long and too deeply rooted in the tradition of a bygone age, and that it has retained too much of that 'stratified spirit' of inequality and discrimination, whose last strongholds are now being rapidly attacked and eliminated in our contemporary society. To break down the barriers - economic, political and psychological - which still sharply divide colonial communities is a task calling for both intense determination and infinite patience. Misguided conceptions of racial prestige and narrow obsolete interpretations of economic interest are grave obstacles. But they must be surmounted if democracy is to have any meaning or appeal for the colonial peoples. The price of failure is the perpetuation of those 'plural' societies whose fissiparous tendencies and inherent weaknesses, luridly revealed by the Japanese assault, make them unfit for survival in the modern world.<sup>8</sup>

The Times also printed two articles on 13 and 14 March by Margery Perham\* inspired by the crisis, 'The Colonial Empire - the Need for a Stocktaking and Review' and 'The Colonial Empire - Capital Labour and the Colour Bar'. Margery Perham was the eminent writer, lecturer and adviser to the government on African affairs. She had travelled widely in Africa and was the first woman fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford. She was an influential figure in colonial administration. She ran courses to Colonial Service probationers and was the Director of the Oxford Institute of Colonial Studies, 1945-8. In spite of her credentials as an adviser to the British government and a trainer of Colonial Service cadets<sup>9</sup>, Perham was nonetheless a colonial reformer and events in South-East Asia appeared to confirm her views of the need for reform. Perham was emphatic in her belief that Britain's very 'survival as a Great power' depended on the ability to learn the lessons of the 'last few weeks'. In her view, the lessons that needed to be

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<sup>8</sup> The Times, 14 March 1942.

<sup>9</sup> C.f. Ronald Robinson, 'Margery Perham and the Colonial Office', in Alison Smith and Mary Bull (eds.) Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa (London, 1991).



learnt were that it was wrong to perpetuate the stratification of colonial societies in separate development and that there was a need for education because 'elsewhere peasants and workers, almost if not quite so ignorant and backward as those of our colonies have fought as men fight only for a cause they recognise as their own'. 'This', argued Perham, 'forces us to ask the long range question whether British rule does develop that solidarity which society needs for health in peace as for strength in war'.<sup>10</sup>

The BBC's response to the events in Singapore is evident in its Empire News directive. News presentation would need careful handling as the 'eyes of the world' both enemies and allies will be turned on Britain to see '(1) How we stand up to this latest in a long series of disasters (2) How we respond to the Prime Minister's call for unity'. The answer to the first task was to try to 'recapture our mood after Dunkirk and in the early days of the battle of Britain. In other words we realise the gravity of things ... We have sold the world the story that we are tough and can take it once. We must do so again'. The second task required circumspection. The BBC should 'remember one golden rule' that they were 'not leaders of opinion', but 'only reporters and reflectors of it'. However there were dangers in taking the task of reporting too far:

We in this country rightly look upon a good smashing newspaper editorial attacking the government as an exercise of our rights as citizens of democracy. But listeners abroad don't see it in the same light as ourselves and for them to hear the BBC voicing unidentified criticism is simply to be presented with a picture of complete confusion.

For example, while they felt they could report Parliamentary criticism, they did not want to follow the newspaper practice and 'put views in the mouth of the man-in-the-street and then talk of them as expressions of public opinion'. With an eye to overseas opinion the BBC would continue to stress that

it is that in this moment of adversity we can expect

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<sup>10</sup> Margery Perham in The Times, 13 March 1942.

unity from the people of these isles. For the present we must err on the side of emphasising this aspect.<sup>11</sup>

A Mass Observation Survey in March 1942 on 'Feelings about the British Empire' attempted to capture the general trend of British public at this point. The report noted that feelings about the empire were 'often ambiguous and complicated' therefore no statistical analysis was attempted as it would be difficult to categorise the results.

At present the sense of guilt about the past and present of the Empire has produced in many people a state of mind which is quite undynamic. The idea of the 'bad' Empire disintegrating before peoples' ideas of how it can be made 'good' have been put into practice is emotionally tiring and from the point of view of war-effort and war enthusiasms, negative. A lost Malaya produces self-recrimination as well as leader recrimination.<sup>12</sup>

It concluded that 'a gesture towards reform', like the granting of 'some kind of freedom to India' might make a considerable difference to the present state of feeling as well as 'relieving a certain amount of emotional tension'. Such a gesture could even 'produce a switch over of feeling towards more constructive ends'.<sup>13</sup>

The case therefore, for a statement on British colonial policy seemed to be irresistible, but not to everyone. Following the adoption of the Atlantic Charter in September 1941 and the undertaking to respect article three in which the 'right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live', Churchill had told the House of Commons that this apparent commitment to self-determination for all did not apply to the colonies but only to Europe. As Churchill explained to the House of Commons on 9 September 1941:

At the Atlantic meeting, we had in mind, primarily the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the States and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke, and the principles governing any

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<sup>11</sup> WAC, E2/129/1, Bernard Moore's Empire News Directive, 16 February 1942.

<sup>12</sup> Mass Observation Report No. 1158, 'Feelings About the British Empire', 16 March 1942.

<sup>13</sup> ibid.



alterations in the territorial boundaries which may have to be made. So that is quite a separate problem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown. We have made declarations on these matters which are complete in themselves, free from ambiguity and related to the conditions and circumstances of the territories and peoples affected. They will be found to be entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the Joint Declaration.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the developments in South-East Asia, however, this was no longer considered to be a sufficient statement on the future of the colonies. Britain faced increasing pressure to produce a Charter for the Colonies from both the United States and from critics in Parliament. The idea of producing a Colonial Charter to explain how the Atlantic Charter would be applied in the colonies remained an issue in Anglo-American relations until mid-1943. Whatever the outcome of high-political deliberations between London and Washington, the implication for Britain's propaganda about the colonies was clear. The colonies could no longer be merely implored to make a maximum war effort. They now had to be told why.

The Colonial Office wanted to avoid the application of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies and also any commitment to responsible government for the colonies. Instead Lord Hailey's new vision for the future was adopted the replacement of 'trusteeship' with 'partnership'.

Lord Hailey was not the first to question the applicability of 'trusteeship' as an accurate definition of British colonial policy. Trusteeship was old-fashioned and out-dated. It did not reflect the new philosophy of British colonial policy of Colonial Development and Welfare and the new pro-active nature of Britain's relationship with the dependent empire. Back in April 1940 when the Colonial Office discussed Sabine's suggestions for a public relations campaign to educate British public opinion about its colonial empire, Lord Dufferin, the Parliamentary

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<sup>14</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, extract from Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in a minute by Gent, 21 August 1942.

Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, had urged the omission of the word 'trusteeship' from any British propaganda about the empire:

may I suggest as the first shot in this campaign for educating the public that we all agree to abandon the use of the word trusteeship as definition of our colonial policy? To the British public a Trustee is always indolent and usually dishonest. Moreover he is solely concerned with material prosperity and with keeping things as they are. I don't think we want any of these conceptions attached to our colonial policy.<sup>15</sup>

At the time, the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald did not agree<sup>16</sup> but in the aftermath of the fall of Singapore, attacks against 'trusteeship' were renewed. Not only was 'trusteeship' an inaccurate reflection of British colonial policy, it had not proved to be sufficient enough to inspire the colonial peoples of South-East Asia to defend the British empire.

Lord Hailey had a lifetime of experience in the British empire behind him, as an administrator in India and as the surveyor of the European empires in Africa. He was 'the high priest of the development idea' and a 'leader of the colonial reform movement'.<sup>17</sup> In a speech delivered in the House of Lords he outlined how the traditional policy of 'trusteeship' had become static. The original conception of trusteeship looked to the state as a protector of rights, as a trustee of colonial peoples' interests against economic exploitation. It was a negative concept which implied paternal protection and the safeguarding of colonial rights. It did not meet the modern requirements of development and welfare. The state's role had changed and it had become the chief agency for public welfare and economic development. Traditional definitions of 'trusteeship' were therefore no longer

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<sup>15</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, minute by Lord Dufferin, 25 April 1940.

<sup>16</sup> PRO, CO323/1754/4, minute by MacDonald, 25 April 1940.

<sup>17</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.157 and John W. Cell, Hailey: a Study in British Imperialism, 1872-1969 (London, 1994), p.263.



appropriate:

It is true we have a new interpretation of it ... we have now everywhere, as part of the background of all our domestic thought, the conception of the State as the chief agency for social welfare. It is that conception which is now forcing its way from domestic into Colonial politics, and which is giving us a new and, as I hold, a more constructive and more beneficial interpretation of trusteeship. There is no lessening of its moral quality, but there is, I think, a very substantial gain from this new conception, a gain of which we have already seen some of the proofs in the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, and of which I have no doubt that we shall see further evidence as time passes on.<sup>18</sup>

In another speech in the House of Lords, his second within two weeks, Hailey advised against making sweeping generalisations about British colonial policy in the light of events in South-East Asia. He deplored the American tendency to talk about the bankruptcy of British policy. He resisted arguments which called for an all-embracing statement on the future of the colonies. The colonies were at different stages of development and were not all inhabited by 'primitive' peoples. He developed his theme of his previous speech that there should be a new interpretation of trusteeship for it had outgrown its purpose and was seen as patronising by the people of the empire:

No one can deny that the sentiment of trusteeship has played a great and most beneficent part in the development of our system of civil administration in the Colonies, but, ... trusteeship has to-day a new and more positive meaning for us, which had already been expressed in our legislation here and will need to be expressed still further as time goes on. And there is another point. The use of the term is irritating to the Colonial people. It was intensely unpopular in India. It is becoming equally unpopular in the Colonies, for it has implications on which it is unnecessary to enlarge but which, if I were a native of the Colonies, I should equally resent.<sup>19</sup>

'Partnership', suggested Hailey should replace trusteeship:

If we need to express ourselves in a formula at all, let our relations be of those of senior and junior partners in the same enterprise, and let it be said that our contract of partnership involves the

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<sup>18</sup> Hansard, 6 May 1942, vol.121, cols. 919-920.

<sup>19</sup> Hansard, 20 May 1942, vol.122, col.1095.

progressive increase of the share which the junior partners have in the conduct of the undertaking.<sup>20</sup>

While it was one thing for Lord Hailey as the 'mouthpiece of enlightened officialdom'<sup>21</sup> to respond to calls for a new statement on British colonial policy, it was clear the government would have to respond too. This job was given to Harold Macmillan\*, the newly appointed Colonial Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. Macmillan had no previous experience or knowledge of the colonial empire and had not relished his move from the Ministry of Supply to the Colonial Office. He commented it felt like 'leaving a madhouse in order to enter a mausoleum'.<sup>22</sup> With his old school and university friend Lord Cranborne in the House of Lords as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Macmillan was the government spokesman on colonial affairs in the House of Commons. Macmillan developed Hailey's idea of 'partnership' in the House of Commons on 24 June 1942.<sup>23</sup> This debate on colonial affairs was the first full supply debate on the subject since June 1939 and also represented the first official reaction to Singapore. In spite of Macmillan's lack of experience in colonial affairs he produced an admirable defence of British colonial policy. Macmillan described the Colonial Office's task during the war which would continue in the aftermath of what he was careful to call a military defeat in the South-East Asia. This task, he suggested, was 'the mobilisation of all the potential resources of the Colonial Empire, both of men and of materials, for the purposes of war'.<sup>24</sup> Having dealt with the short term requirements of empire cooperation to win the war, Macmillan chose to look to the future, because 'in the midst of the hurly burly of war it is refreshing

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<sup>20</sup> ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Leonard Barnes, Soviet Light on the Colonies (London, 1944). p.127.

<sup>22</sup> Harold Macmillan, The Blast of War, 1939-1945 (London, 1967), p.161.

<sup>23</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.126.

<sup>24</sup> Hansard, 24 June 1942, vol.380, col.2003.



and stimulating to lift one's eyes occasionally to a further horizon'. Macmillan took pains to describe the new principle of 'partnership' as an evolutionary continuation of the 'strong strain of idealism and humanitarianism running through British thought' which had been 'expressed in practical form in the policy of the British Government'.<sup>25</sup> If the British empire was to last it would have to continue to show its capacity for change:

The Empires of the past have died because they could not change with the times. They were rigid. They conformed to a fixed pattern. By contrast our Empire has had the great quality of adaption. By that it lives.

The relationship between the mother country and the colonies could also be of a 'lasting character', it would not wither and die once the colony had reached maturity, but would continue within the framework of the Commonwealth because of mutual dependency:

The war has shown us certain inescapable facts, of which we will learn the lesson. Self-government without security means nothing. Independence without defence is vain. It is in the light of these events that we should think of our future relationship with the Colonies as a permanent and not a transitory thing.<sup>26</sup>

Having declared that the relationship between the colonies and Britain would be 'permanent', Macmillan then produced his vision for the future:

The governing principle of the Colonial Empire should, therefore, be the principle of partnership between the various elements composing it. Out of partnership comes understanding and friendship. Within the fabric of the Commonwealth lies the future of the Colonial territories. According to different needs and different conditions there will be the greatest divergence of local responsibility, but, however far these may be developed, there are broad Imperial problems which only admit of corporate resolution.<sup>27</sup>

The new principle of 'partnership' was immediately seized upon by Labour members of the Supply Committee who wanted to know whether this represented a new statement of

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<sup>25</sup> ibid., cols. 2013-2014.

<sup>26</sup> ibid., col.2015.

<sup>27</sup> ibid., cols. 2015-2016.

policy: was it the Government's interpretation of the 'appropriate Clause in the Atlantic Charter'? Was this meant to be a real 'partnership' or 'just another form of words to delude people'? After all, it was argued, the real relationship between the Colonies and the Mother Country was not one of 'partnership' but 'subordination'.<sup>28</sup>

Macmillan denied that this was a new statement of policy but an enunciation of policy based on 'the impressions' he had formed after his comparatively short tenure of office. Like Hailey, Macmillan went on to elaborate his view of the changing role of the state as an agent of change and prosperity:

The Colonies depend upon capital development. Before the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act there was too much tendency to think of each Colony as a separate financial proposition instead of thinking of the show as a whole. Some Colonies are poor and some are rich. The estate must be considered as a whole ... The Colonies are poor. Why are they poor? Because of capitalist exploitation, or because of insufficient capital? Because they are too much governed, or too little governed? Because we interfere too much, or too little? Because there are too many white planters and settlers, or too few? Because there are too many European traders, or not enough? No. They are poor because they are just beginning. They are four or five centuries behind. Our job is to move them, to hustle them, across this great interval of time as rapidly as we can.<sup>29</sup>

Creech Jones, the Labour MP and Chairman of the Fabian Colonial Bureau thought that Macmillan's survey did not go far enough in addressing the 'idea of status' and political reform in the colonies. He wanted a commitment to a new imperial relationship which

admits for no race superiority, no inherent or permanent inequality between ourselves and the peoples, and no divorce between Government and the peoples of the territories.<sup>30</sup>

In this relationship Britain would

do everything possible to accelerate the process of self-government, that the whole process of government is geared to the supreme purpose of fitting the

<sup>28</sup> ibid., Maxton and Haden Guest, col.2016.

<sup>29</sup> ibid., Macmillan, cols.2016-2017, 2020.

<sup>30</sup> ibid., Creech Jones, col. 2043.



Colonial peoples for political responsibility. The 'misapprehension' which had been created following Churchill's exclusion of the colonies from the Atlantic Charter, had not been clarified by Churchill's assurance that comprehensive declarations on colonial policy already existed. Creech Jones wanted these declarations to be published in the form of a White Paper as a 'supplementary charter - in realistic and convincing terms, pointing out the way to freedom, equality, responsibility, the reconstruction of colonial economic and social life'.<sup>31</sup>

Following Macmillan's speech in the House of Commons, the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office received enquiries about the possibility of a broadcast by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of 'partnership'. It was noted that the Daily Telegraph had taken up the 'partnership' theme and that this description was welcomed as going a long way towards being the 'much looked for successor to the word "trusteeship"'.<sup>32</sup> The time was not considered right for a broadcast on 'partnership' because discussions about a colonial declaration were proceeding. Furthermore, such a statement would require the Prime Minister's authority.<sup>33</sup> Although the idea of a broadcast to specifically amplify the 'partnership' theme was, for the time being, put to one side, a follow up broadcast on the House of Commons Colonial Estimates was arranged on the BBC's Home Service on 28 July.<sup>34</sup>

The pressure for the government to make some kind of authoritative declaration on the future of colonial policy intensified. On 1 July Creech Jones asked Macmillan to promise to publish the 'comprehensive set of declarations'

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<sup>31</sup> ibid., Creech Jones, col. 2044.

<sup>32</sup> PRO, CO323/1849/7484/1941, Keating to Sidebotham, 29 June 1942.

<sup>33</sup> PRO, CO323/1849/74/84/1941, Sidebotham to Gent, 30 June 1942.

<sup>34</sup> PRO, CO323/1849/7484/1941, minute by Thornley, 10 July 1942.

made on colonial policy.<sup>35</sup> The Colonial Office hoped that a declaration in the form of a White Paper could be made on the basis of past statements. This led the Colonial Office to search for the past declarations which Churchill in his speech in September 1941 had confidently said already existed. The results were limited and did not seem to represent enough to present to the House of Commons. Christopher Eastwood\*, head of the General Department thought that the resulting White Paper would expose the Colonial Office to unwanted criticism. Sir Arthur Dawe, head of the African Division agreed and advised against giving such proclamations any further publicity because they called attention in a 'pretentious way to the bareness of the land' and were likely to arouse the antagonism of colonial populations abroad.<sup>36</sup> The East African Department in the Colonial Office was particularly anxious about the publication of a White Paper as it would include statements made in the past on issues like native labour and land policies and the proposals for 'Closer Union' between Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya. The fear was that, 'however judicious a selection is made', the result would 'rekindle old controversies, which might have dangerous political results, especially while the war has still to be fought'.<sup>37</sup> It would also invite unwanted 'comparison with our record of actual performance'.<sup>38</sup> Gater recommended that the only way out of the impasse would be a personal appeal by Macmillan to Creech Jones to drop the issue.<sup>39</sup>

Macmillan himself was appalled by the declarations previously made by the government on colonial policy as they were not 'complete in themselves' or 'free from

<sup>35</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.126-7.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Eastwood, 5 August 1942; minute by Dawe, 27 August 1942.

<sup>37</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Seel, 30 August 1942.

<sup>38</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Seel, 26 August 1942.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Gater, 2 September 1942.



ambiguity'. They were 'scrappy, obscure and jejune':

We have no complete list of our pledges and commitments. In private life this leads inevitably to bankruptcy.

Macmillan could only conclude that Churchill's 'sweeping claim' of 9 September 1941 had been written 'more or less on his own'. In these circumstances the proposed White Paper could not be published. Macmillan agreed with Gater that the only possible course was to make a personal appeal to Creech Jones on the grounds that it would 'bad manners' at a time when the British government was discussing the future of the Pacific with the United States as well as 'very bad tactics' to disclose 'our hand prematurely, before a Peace Conference'.<sup>40</sup>

#### Proposals for an Anglo-American Declaration on the Colonies

In the meantime the British Ambassador in Washington and former Viceroy of India, Lord Halifax, ensured that the Colonial Office would not be able to deal with the issue of a British statement on the colonies as a purely domestic political matter. On 24 August, during a meeting with Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State and exponent of 'Cobdenite free trade internationalism',<sup>41</sup> Halifax prematurely disclosed that the British government was considering issuing a Colonial Charter on Britain's responsibilities towards her colonies. Hull immediately proposed a joint Anglo-American declaration which he thought would have greater weight than a unilateral statement by the British government.<sup>42</sup>

This unwelcome intervention by the United States into the colonial question reflected the realities of the wartime relationship. The unprecedented and successful cooperation achieved between two sovereign states has been noted elsewhere. But the Anglo-American relationship was

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<sup>40</sup> PRO, C0323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Macmillan, undated.

<sup>41</sup> Thorne, op.cit., p.142.

<sup>42</sup> Williams, op.cit., p.274-275; PRO, C0323/1858/9057/1942, Halifax to FO, 24 August 1942.

increasingly a partnership of 'unequals'. While Churchill believed that 'a complete understanding between Britain and the United States outweighed all else',<sup>43</sup> this did not mean that differences did not exist. British interests were defended.

Undoubtedly there was a great deal of mutual suspicion about each other's war aims. In chapter three American pre-Pearl Harbour American anti-imperialism was examined. Now, as an ally, the United States had the opportunity to make it clear that the United States was not fighting to save the British empire. President Roosevelt liked to emphasise the anti-imperialist credentials of his own administration and cited the American guarantee of independence for the Philippines by 1946 as a model for other empires. In the long-standing American tradition of support for self-determination Roosevelt espoused his anti-imperialist creed to journalists:

there never has been, there isn't now and there never will be any race of people on earth fit to serve as masters of their fellow men ... we believe that any nationality, no matter how small, has the inherent rights to its own nationhood.<sup>44</sup>

On a more pragmatic level the United States perceived the British empire as a trading rival and were opposed to imperial preference. Instead the United States advocated open door policies and free trade. Suspicion of economic imperialism was also mutual. Indeed British officials often deplored what they considered the hypocritical posturing of a state whose own 'empire' extended to Guam, Samoa, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, the Panama Canal, who dominated Latin America economically and denied rights of representation to its own black citizens. In 1942 Gandhi reminded Roosevelt of his own hypocrisy when he spoke 'of the suppression of the blacks in the United States in the same breath as attacking the imperial rule of the United Kingdom'.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Thorne, op.cit., pp.699 and 122.

<sup>44</sup> Roosevelt quoted in Thorne, op.cit., p.103.

<sup>45</sup> Thorne, op.cit., pp.145-6 and 727.



If the American administration was critical of the British colonial record it reflected a general attitude towards the European empires as a result of Japanese conquest in South East-Asia. According to the American Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles:

it was the general opinion that the Dutch have made the best administrators, and the British the second best, in parts of their Empire. Portugal would certainly come lowest on anybody's list, while France and Belgium would come somewhat higher on the scale.<sup>46</sup>

The French came in for particular condemnation, they had collaborated with the Germans in Europe and had given the Japanese airfields in Indo-China in 1940. Roosevelt had grave doubts about post-war colonial restitution for the French, particularly in Indo-China, where the Administration 'saw the French collapse as the final illustration and outcome of the historical decadence of European power'.<sup>47</sup> But the British could take little comfort from being better than the French. They were still an empire and according to the United States in need of reform.

Apart from general anti-imperialist statements, American criticism of the British empire was essentially a reaction to British policy in India and China. Little was known of or commented on about the British dependencies in sub-Saharan Africa. But this lack of knowledge and interest about Africa did not mean that American calls for a joint Anglo-American statement on the colonies made British Africa immune from the discussions at the inter-governmental level. A Colonial Charter would have universal application.

Lord Cranborne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was not enamoured by the idea of a joint declaration. As the only Secretary of State for the Colonies who carried any weight in the wartime coalition

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Louis, op.cit., p.237.

<sup>47</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.28 and Donald Cameron Watt, Succeeding John Bull (Cambridge, 1984), pp.222 and 237.

government<sup>48</sup> and in spite of his friendship with the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden\*<sup>49</sup>, Cranborne stood up to Foreign Office attempts to make a sacrificial lamb out of the empire on the alter of Anglo-American relations. As heir to one of the country's most prominent aristocratic and imperial families, he felt that the 'British Empire was the concern of the British, not the Americans, and he saw no reason whatsoever to be apologetic'.<sup>50</sup> With the American predisposition to declarations of independence, any document 'which eventually emerges from the State Department is likely to be very different and almost certainly far more embarrassing' than any which Britain would draw up. Cranborne recognised, however, that the British government was in an embarrassing situation anyway, and that a joint declaration might be 'the way to get out of it', especially as it seemed probable that Hull would 'press his proposal strongly'.<sup>51</sup>

Hull's proposal for a joint declaration was considered by a group of interested British Ministers which included Cranborne, the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, the internationally minded Dominions Secretary, Clement Attlee, and, in initial stages, the Secretary of State for India and former Secretary of State for the Colonies, Leo Amery. Discussion centred on the possible contents of a Colonial Charter which would be acceptable to Britain. The issue was complicated by the political necessity, on the one hand, for the British government to obtain American support over Far Eastern military strategy during the war and for collective defense arrangements in the post-war period, and on the other, to clarify the organisation of a joint Anglo-American Pacific regional council. The aim was to involve the Americans in colonial issues 'without threatening

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<sup>48</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>49</sup> Cranborne was a staunch supporter of Eden and his Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office had resigned with him in 1938.

<sup>50</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.187.

<sup>51</sup> PRO, CO323/1848/7322/1942, minute by Cranborne, 4 September 1942.



internal British policy'.<sup>52</sup>

It was noted that discussions with the Americans about colonial and trusteeship issues were handicapped by an 'intellectual difference' in each country's approach to the question. While the British were 'accustomed to proceed from the particular to the general' the Americans 'do just the opposite'.<sup>53</sup> Due to the great variety of conditions which existed in the colonial empire and the differences between the colonies in the progress of their political development, the British were reluctant to make any universal statement on the application of the Atlantic Charter to colonial territories. While Cranborne was willing to accommodate American and British Labour Party objectives for the internationalisation of colonial questions to the point of suggesting the creation of consultative non-executive committees in all areas, he sought to exclude the United States from regions like Africa where 'she had no clear-cut interests'.<sup>54</sup> In so doing, Cranborne sought to retain the principle of continuing British responsibility for the administration of her colonial empire and its gradual progress in social and economic development according to the conditions which pertained in each colony.

Throughout the autumn of 1942 ministerial discussions continued in order to produce a draft Anglo-American declaration on the colonies. Interdepartmental discussions were held in the hope of achieving a consensus about the contents of the draft declaration before it was presented to the Cabinet for its agreement at the end of the year. The interests of the departments concerned had to be balanced. For political reasons, a major Foreign Office consideration was to reduce all potential areas of tension within the Anglo-American relationship and to achieve the maximum agreement possible between the two countries while

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<sup>52</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.131.

<sup>53</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.176 quoting Lord Halifax to Eden, 23 April 1943.

<sup>54</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.132.

protecting British interests. Conversely, the Colonial Office sought to limit any concessions to the American point of view; any declaration would impact on British colonial policy as a whole and was not seen solely in the isolation of the Anglo-American relationship. For example, the Colonial Office wanted to ensure that a joint declaration did not go beyond the partnership ideal. The Colonial Office was also vehemently opposed to mention of timetables for 'independence' or even the very word 'independence' in the British draft.

The differences in the priorities of the Colonial and Foreign Offices can be seen in Cranborne's comment on a Foreign Office draft of the joint declaration. Cranborne was appalled to find that the Foreign Office had included a phrase about colonies who were 'unable to bear the full burden of complete independence':

We all know in our heart of hearts that most of the colonies, especially in Africa, will probably not be fit for complete independence for centuries. To use a phrase of that kind is hypocritical: it will encourage them to keep up a simmering agitation. I am responsible for the colonies. I could not agree to a phrase which is likely to have such deplorable effects, just to placate the Americans, who do not understand the conditions under which we have to work.<sup>55</sup>

Discussions continued between the departments to produce a British draft. In public Churchill made it clear that any American attempt to turn a joint declaration into statement which implied the dissolution of the British empire would be unacceptable. In his Mansion House speech of 10 November Churchill was explicit when he told the audience that he had 'not become the King's first Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> PRO, FO371/31526/U1292, Cranborne to Eden, 28 October 1942; c.f. Lee and Petter, op.cit., pp.130-1.

<sup>56</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.135. American press reaction to this speech was not universally unfavourable. As a Foreign Office weekly media report, 21 November 1942, noted the speech had resulted in seven press comments, five of which were favourable to the Prime Minister. For example, the Chicago Daily News of 12 November wrote, 'One



The Colonial Office propagandists were frustrated that they were unable to embark on a positive campaign about the colonial empire because of the on-going discussions about the Anglo-American joint declaration. Sabine wanted a comprehensive campaign which would counter the Singapore effect and tackle the 'defeatist feeling about the Empire' by showing 'the credit side of our record'.<sup>57</sup> He pointed out that 'history' was 'not news' and that it was essential to develop a publicity sense and to overcome the attitude that Britain 'as a nation' was not 'very keen ... on talking about what we have done'. To do this it was necessary to produce a 'steady stream of material on what we are doing now'.<sup>58</sup> He advocated less talk of 'constitutional theory' and more emphasis on the practical 'achievements such as shipping, airways, cables, engineering etc.'.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the MOI wanted a more systematic approach to propaganda in the colonies and wished to proceed with the construction of plans for specific areas. Like Sabine, frustration was voiced that any efforts to plan for propaganda in the colonies was likely to 'fall on deaf ears' until two pronouncements were made by the British government about the colonies, 'i) as to their political future, ii) as to their economic future'.<sup>60</sup>

Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, Sir George Gater, agreed that a 'properly co-

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or two Americans have taken it upon themselves to proclaim that we are not fighting to preserve the British Empire. This is certainly true. But by itself it is misleading. For it is equally true that we are not fighting to destroy the British Empire...The British Prime Minister meant what he said and it is too bad that he even had to say it', PRO, F0371/30689/A11371.

<sup>57</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sabine, 7 September 1942.

<sup>58</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, Memorandum by Sabine on the activities of the Public Relations Department, 1 October 1942.

<sup>59</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minutes of a meeting to discuss the co-ordination of Empire publicity in Britain, 12 November 1942.

<sup>60</sup> PRO, INF1/555, minute by Cameron, 18 May 1942.

ordinated scheme of publicity activities' was required. The central problem was that the Colonial Office was only 'tackling the question of publicity in bits and pieces'.<sup>61</sup> Harold Macmillan agreed with Sabine that there was 'too great a consciousness of what has been wrong and too little recognition of what has been right' in public attitudes to the colonial empire. He identified that the major problem confronting the propagandists was the need for a 'personality and a theme'. He was sure that a 'personality' could be provided, but thought that the 'theme' had yet to be agreed. Until a 'theme' had been developed the Colonial Office would have to 'make the best of a humdrum performance'.<sup>62</sup> While the discussions continued about a joint declaration there was little prospect of a comprehensive publicity initiative.

#### American Criticism of 'Imperialism' and Propaganda in the United States

Hitherto publicity in the United States about the colonial empire, like publicity in general about the colonial empire, had been handled in 'bits and pieces'. In the United States the publicity effort was hampered by the anti-imperial attitude of many American commentators who vociferously argued that the United States was not fighting for the preservation of the British empire. Although the United States was now an ally, the aim of re-educating American opinion about the empire was not abandoned. As Frank Darvall, head of the American Division in the MOI explained, the British propaganda effort in the United States was just as important now the Americans were fighting. Securing 'American collaboration in the defeat of the Axis' had only been one of propaganda's aims. The continued support of the United States was also necessary, for unless Britain could 'also secure maximum collaboration in the conclusion of a satisfactory peace' an Allied

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<sup>61</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, Gater to Cranborne, 8 October 1942.

<sup>62</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, Macmillan to Cranborne, 9 October 1942.



victory would be 'largely worthless'.<sup>63</sup> Restitution of the British empire that had been lost and preservation of the British empire that Britain held would be part of a satisfactory peace.

In a wider context the organisation and direction of publicity conducted by the British Information Services in the United States had been under review by the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office was anxious to preserve its role of 'representation' against any MOI initiatives in this area of responsibility. As Alan Dudley\*, the officer formerly in charge of the British Library of Information in New York, put it, 'publicity must be the servant of representation and not its master'. All publicity efforts were hindered by an American 'phobia' against propaganda and Dudley recommended that all publicity in the United States should be as unobtrusive as possible. A further problem identified by Dudley was that there was a lack of policy, proper planning and training of British publicists.<sup>64</sup>

These general problems of publicity in the United States compounded the specific problems involved in trying to project the British empire to the Americans. Publicity about the empire had been criticised for only answering American criticism and not anticipating it.<sup>65</sup> Harold Butler\*, the minister responsible for publicity at the British Embassy in Washington, thought that 'a clear statement of our post-war policy in relation to the colonies would probably be extremely useful' even though Churchill was not prepared to go beyond the Atlantic Charter.<sup>66</sup> The Colonial Office regretted the lack of a policy on empire propaganda and the Foreign Office's nervousness about the subject. Sir Edward Gent, Assistant

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<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Cull, *op.cit.*, p.189.

<sup>64</sup> PRO, FO371/30670/A6403, memorandum by Dudley, 6 July 1942.

<sup>65</sup> PRO, FO371/30671/A8182, minute by Tahourdin, 7 September 1942.

<sup>66</sup> PRO, CO875/18/10, minute by Sidebotham reporting a conversation he had with Butler, 15 June 1942.

Under-Secretary of State, who supervised the Defence, Eastern, General and Public Relations Departments, thought that the approach should be less unequivocal. The political problem should be faced head on and Britain should not 'take refuge in economic ideals of material betterment'.<sup>67</sup>

American ignorance and criticism of the British empire proved to be a difficult nut to crack. British propaganda efforts continued to appeal to American reason. It was thought to be important for the British advocate not to lose his case because he did not 'understand his jury'. The main problem American stereotypical views about British imperialism, that the colonies were a 'herd of cows kept for their milk'. The American attitude towards empire was sensitive because of the prevalent view that 'the American republic was born of a revolution against colonial mismanagement from London'. Furthermore Americans contrasted their 'imperial' record with the British experience:

'We Americans treated the Philipinos well, so they fought for us on the Day of Reckoning. The British treated the Malayans and the Burmese badly, so they wouldn't lift a finger to help them'. From this the argument is expanded to a general damnation of British colonial rule. It feeds the American sense of superiority.

Few Americans understood the difference between Dominions and colonies and thus the 'grand theme of the evolution of the Empire' was almost 'unknown'.<sup>68</sup>

Between November 1942 and July 1943 David MacDougall, a 'beachcomber' with Far Eastern experience in the Colonial Service in Hong Kong, served as a temporary adviser on colonial affairs to the British Embassy in Washington. He was given the task analysing the state of American opinion about Britain's colonial empire and to make recommendations about future publicity policy to the MOI. He recommended that there should be an increased supply of basic material

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<sup>67</sup> PRO, CO875/18/10, minute by Gent, 17 June 1942.

<sup>68</sup> PRO, CO875/18/10, 'notes on the presentation of our colonial empire in the United States', by R.J. Cruikshank, the American correspondent of The Times, 16 September 1942.



to the United States, that there should be more speakers and that there should be a constant stream of material sent to the BIS and interviews with American correspondents in London. He concluded that it was not only the general American public who needed the 'slow-dripping poison' of re-education about the British empire but also the 'academic liberals' who were often Britain's most vocal critics. MacDougall illustrated his point with the example of Michael Straight the Washington editor of the New Republic:

Son of a rich family, Oxford educated, his sincerity is unquestioned and his brains first-class. Why then does he talk nonsense about the colonies, why in particular does he dare to argue with Hailey on issues of fact concerning the colonies? The answer is simple ... If Lord Hailey is right, then Michael Straight becomes nothing: he ceases, in fact, to be the fearless crusader against exploitation and imperialism and takes on a duller hue. His whole picture of himself and his role is compromised: therefore (subconsciously, for I think he is honest) he cannot admit Hailey is right. The fairly exhibitionist streak in these people does not permit them to acquiesce in normality: they fight tooth and nail against anything which tends to reduce them to it. Hence the otherwise puzzling flying in the face of facts: hence the futility of argument.<sup>69</sup>

MacDougall recommended that publicity should state the facts 'endlessly and often' and that material should be prepared to refute the following criticisms:

that colonial peoples are exploited and uncared for, that they have little education and public health, that they are ruled from the top by an army of gin-sodden whites who refer slyly to the white man's burden and have large bank balances: that the 'natives' have no freedom of speech and no part or say in their own government, provincial and national and that they have no hopes of ever acquiring any sort of bloody revolution: that the schools, hospitals, agricultural institutes, administration and legal services are the jealous preserves of the white man: that white and coloured do not mix or cooperate on the social, professional or business plane.<sup>70</sup>

To make matters worse American criticism was often public and outspoken. For example, the American magazine

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<sup>69</sup> PRO, CO875/18/12, MacDougall to Sabine, 12 March 1943.

<sup>70</sup> ibid.

Life published 'an open letter from the editors of Life to the people of England' in October 1942. This letter was the work of the publisher and editor of Time and Life, Henry Luce, an aggressive proponent of the 'American Century'.<sup>71</sup> The letter claimed to speak for the majority of the 134 million citizens of the United States and called for 'concessions in policy':

Quit fighting a war to hold the Empire together and join with us and Russia and your other allies to fight a war to win by whatever strategy is best for us. After victory has been won, then the British people can decide what to do about the Empire (for you may be sure we do not want it). But if you cling to the Empire at the expense of a United Nations victory, you will lose the war. Because you will lose us.<sup>72</sup>

The United States, the letter continued, was fighting for the principle of freedom. While Americans recognised that India posed a difficult problem for the British, they did not see that the British 'solution' to date had provided 'any evidence of principles of any kind'. Furthermore, the letter asked 'in the light of what you are doing in India, how do you expect us to talk of "principles" and look our soldiers in the eye?'. The founding principle behind American participation in the war was freedom:

that if one wants to be free one cannot be free alone - one must be free with other people ... that is what we mean - most of us - when we talk about a United Nations war ... this is a war by free men to establish freedom more firmly and over a wider area on this earth. And most of us are beginning to understand this is the only kind of war that will win a real victory.<sup>73</sup>

The letter concluded with a warning:

if you want to keep us on your side you must move part of the way over to our side. If you will do so, then you will find that our side is plenty big. It always has been big. It is much bigger than Britain. It is much bigger than the British Empire. It is bigger than both of us combined. You will find our side on the steppes of Asia and across the deserts of Africa and

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<sup>71</sup> Thorne, op.cit., pp.142 and 107. Luce looked forward to an 'American Century' in which American democracy could create a 'vital, international economy and ... an international moral order'.

<sup>72</sup> PRO, CO875/18/10, Life, 12 October 1942.

<sup>73</sup> ibid.



up and down the muddy banks of the Mississippi and along the smooth sliding waters of the Thames. Our side is as big as all outdoors.<sup>74</sup>

The Foreign Office recognised the seriousness of this kind of American criticism. Sir Alexander Cadogan\*, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, wrote to Cyril Radcliffe, Director General of the MOI about Foreign Office's concerns and the impact of American criticism in the future post-war period:

We believe that on the sympathy with which the Americans view our imperial system ... will greatly depend their attitude towards the question of post-war collaboration with us. Unless they come generally to regard our ideas and practice in the field of the administration of backward peoples and dependent areas as no less advanced than their own, they may be unwilling to remain in partnership with us and other nations in the establishment of a stable world order after the war. It is not inconceivable that they might recoil entirely from collaboration with 'British imperialism' or, on the other hand, seek to impose American leadership on us in the belief that it represents a higher and more enlightened political idealism.<sup>75</sup>

Radcliffe agreed that the American attitude was 'unsympathetic' and was worried that an accepted belief appeared to be that one of the United State's war aims was the 'end of imperialism'. The solution to this problem was not merely a question of 'publicity' or 'instruction' as this alone would not 'effect that major conversion of American feeling'. What was needed in the first place was, according to Radcliffe, a study of American opinion. To this end he recommended the establishment of an interdepartmental committee of the Foreign, Colonial and India Offices and the MOI. Second, the American Administration should be tackled 'with a frank enquiry whether they are with us or against us in this matter'. Third, the interdepartmental committee would recommend new publicity measures about the empire in the United States.<sup>76</sup>

Cadogan warmly welcomed Radcliffe's idea about the

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<sup>74</sup> ibid.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, CO875/19/2, Cadogan to Radcliffe, 29 September 1942.

<sup>76</sup> PRO, CO875/19/2, Radcliffe to Cadogan, 9 October 1942.

setting up of an interdepartmental committee. The Interdepartmental Committee on American Opinion and the British Empire was established in December 1942 under the chairmanship of the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Richard Law\*. Law was the son of the former Prime Minister Bonar Law, had an American wife and had worked in the newspaper industry in the United States where he had also travelled extensively. The Law Committee had the following terms of reference:

(a) to study the state of American feeling about the British Empire with a view to ascertaining the measure and extent of favourable and hostile reactions.

(b) to study and make recommendations concerning the best methods of stimulating favourable and moderating hostile feeling with a view to securing a general sentiment sympathetic to the maintenance of the British imperial system and recognition of the Empire as a suitable partner with the United States in world affairs.<sup>77</sup>

At the first meeting of the 'Law Committee' Radcliffe cautioned the Committee against over-ambition, stating that 'what was wanted was an American recognition of our right to hold on to our system and a recognition of its inherent value in the world'. At the very least, he added, 'it should be enough if the Americans would leave us alone'.<sup>78</sup>

Sabine warned that while it was sensible to take into account the effect on American opinion that decisions about British colonial policy might have, he thought that:

it might be a short step from deciding to put across some act of policy in a way palatable to American opinion, to doing some act calculated to appeal to or appease them.

For the 'dividing line between public relations and policy may be at times dangerously obscure'.

Sabine thought that the government was not doing enough in Britain or in the United States to explain British colonial policy and that:

the creation so far as it is possible of a more healthy public opinion in America on British Colonial matters depends very largely on whether we can create

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<sup>77</sup> PRO, CO875/19/2, Cadogan to Radcliffe, 7 November 1942; FO371/34086/A3, Scott to Dudley, 31 December 1942.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, FO371/34086/A78, minutes of the first meeting of the 'Law Committee', 30 December 1942.



and maintain a healthier public opinion here, and make sure that this is reflected to America.<sup>79</sup>

In the meantime, however, it was clear that the Americans were not going to drop the issue of the future of the British empire. The American Administration continued to pursue the idea of a Colonial Charter. Halifax talked to the American columnist Walter Lippmann about the proposed joint declaration. Lippmann thought that while a joint declaration was a good idea in principle. However he would not like it to be the 'first official shot' because American public opinion might conclude that Britain had been 'pushed into it by the Americans'. Instead he advised that something should be said in general terms by the British first. While Churchill thought that it would be better to leave the suggestion on one side for the moment, a speech made by Lord Cranborne in the House of Lords was used as the public opportunity to put forward the Colonial Office's attitude to the 'Colonial Charter' issue and to articulate Colonial Office objections to declarations with universal applications.<sup>80</sup>

Although Cranborne had been replaced by Oliver Stanley as Secretary of State for the Colonies on 23 November 1942 to become Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords, Cranborne's involvement in colonial affairs was undiminished and he continued to be the spokesman for colonial affairs in the Lords. The Labour peer, Lord Listowel, sought a clarification of the government's attitude towards a 'Colonial Charter' following on from a broadcast made by the Republican leader, Wendell Wilkie. Wilkie had spoken about the responsibility of the United States and Britain in 'making the free world a commonwealth of free nations' and a statement made by Roosevelt during a press conference in which he said that 'the provisions of

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<sup>79</sup> PRO, C0875/18/12, memorandum by Sabine, 'Information about the Colonies in America', 3 May 1943.

<sup>80</sup> PRO, F0371/31526/U1207, Halifax to FO, 30 October 1942; Churchill to Eden, 2 November 1942. For Cranborne's speech to the House of Lords see Hansard, vol. 125, cols. 401-416, 3 December 1942.

the Atlantic Charter applied to all humanity'.<sup>81</sup>

Several peers spoke in favour of the extension of the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies. Lord Samuel, the former High Commissioner for Palestine, 1920-5 and an elder statesman of the Liberal Party thought the Atlantic Charter could not be 'subject to geographical limitation'. According to Samuel, Wilkie had not envisioned the liquidation of the British empire, but 'the more rapid extension of self-government'.<sup>82</sup>

Lord Faringdon urged the formulation of a Colonial Charter as 'an earnest of our intentions':

Just as the Beveridge Report is an earnest of our intention to carry out domestically the implications of the Atlantic Charter, so the Colonial Charter would be an earnest of the Government's sincerity and of their activities in pressing towards a better world.<sup>83</sup>

In his speech Cranborne wanted to advertise the achievements of Britain's colonial record to balance against the 'misdirected' criticisms which had been aimed at Britain following the fall of Malaya. He argued that it did not follow that because of what he called a military failure, a 'wider measure of self-government could have provided a cure'. Although he recognised that it was 'alien to the British temperament to advertise our achievements', he thought that there were times when 'reticence can be carried too far'.

He was not sure, however that the best way for the government to proceed would be by producing a 'Colonial Charter':

Even the term 'Colonial Charter' is to my mind open to criticism. It is no doubt compact and convenient. But anyone who has had any personal experience of the Colonial Empire would, I think, agree that it tends to be oversimplified and in some ways misleading.<sup>84</sup>

The 'simple course' of producing a 'standardised Colonial policy applicable equally to all the territories of the

<sup>81</sup> Hansard, vol. 125, col. 381, 3 December 1942.

<sup>82</sup> ibid., col. 391.

<sup>83</sup> ibid., col. 401.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., cols. 402 and 403-4.



British Colonial Empire' was inadvisable because of the 'diversity' of 'continents, islands, climates, conditions, problems; above all, a diversity of peoples, greater than in any Empire of the past'. Britain had never established a 'cut and dried pattern' in the empire and had operated different systems of administration 'distinguished above all by variety, elasticity and flexibility'. In order to accommodate this diversity political progress in the empire had been characterised by a process of 'very gradual evolution'.<sup>85</sup>

Cranborne clearly stated that the 'ultimate objective' of British policy was to 'promote self-government in the Colonies'. It was Britain's aim to establish free democratic institutions before self-government was achieved:

...we do not mean by this the mere perpetuation of what we found when we went there, government by some local autocrat or some narrow tribal oligarchy, with all the poverty and cruelty which have so often accompanied it in the past. We seek indeed to retain all that is good in the existing social and political system, but we aim also to graft to it modern ideas and the lessons of our own experience, so that finally the peoples of even the most backward Colonies may become fit for free institutions, self-government by the people as a whole - which is what we mean by free institutions - and the problem of making free institutions understood and work in backward and primitive communities is, as noble lords who have had first-hand experience know, not an easy one.<sup>86</sup>

The grafting on of a democratic system of government African communities organised along tribal lines would not be simple; 'democracy, as we know it here, is not an easy system of government to work' and it implies a 'very high standard of political development'. He repeated that it was Britain's aim 'to equip Colonial peoples to administer their own affairs, whether our goal is near or far'. In working towards this aim, Cranborne suggested, Britain had already made 'considerable progress'.<sup>87</sup>

In commending political progress already made, for

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<sup>85</sup> ibid., col. 407.

<sup>86</sup> ibid., col. 408.

<sup>87</sup> ibid., col. 409.

example the appointment of Africans to the Governors' Executive Councils in West Africa, Cranborne attached great importance to the 'modern doctrine of partnership'. He asked peers to remember that the British empire was 'a living organism', which was 'constantly changing and developing'.<sup>88</sup>

Cranborne recognised the great contribution made by the colonies to Britain's war effort, particularly in the dark hours following the fall of France:

Let us never forget that what stood between Hitler and absolute victory in 1940...was not Britain, an isolated island standing alone in the sea, but the British Empire, that commonwealth of free peoples and dependencies of which the Colonial Empire forms so essential a part.

Britain and her Empire had come through this 'severest test', she had been 'tempered by the fire'. Now it remained 'for us to go forward, calm, resolute and confident'.<sup>89</sup>

He answered critics who suggested that the days of the British empire were numbered, Cranborne concluded by looking to the future and Britain's continuing global mission:

all the British Colonies at the present time are moving in the right direction. In some cases progress is rapid; in some it is inevitably slow, and to attempt to go too fast would upset existing institutions before the population was ready for others. Of one thing I am sure - the British Colonial Empire is not coming to an end. The work that we have to do is only beginning. We, the citizens of the British Empire, whatever our race, religion, or colour, have a mission to perform, and it is a mission that is essential to the welfare of the world.

Cranborne did not make any declaration about the direct application of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies, but merely stated that the British mission was

to ensure the survival of the way of life for which the United Nations are fighting, a way of life based on the freedom, tolerance, justice, and mutual understanding, in harmony with the principles of the

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<sup>88</sup> ibid., col.411.

<sup>89</sup> ibid., col. 414-5.



Atlantic Charter.<sup>90</sup>

Cranborne's speech was hailed by Lord Listowel as one of 'the most interesting contributions' to the colonial debate during the war.<sup>91</sup> Sections from it, in particular the passages denying that the colonial empire was about to come to an end and about self-government being the ultimate aim of colonial policy, were distributed to the press by the Colonial Office's Press Section.<sup>92</sup> The Times carried a full report of the speech and its leader column praised Cranborne's speech in terms which the Colonial Office Press Section would have been hard pressed to criticise:

Lord Cranborne's speech was as able a vindication of British colonial policy and owed its great persuasiveness largely to its restraint. He based his argument on history, which has left an indelible mark upon the Colonial Empire. The past of the Empire is as constantly misrepresented as its present is misunderstood ... The clear facts, as stated by Lord Cranborne, are the best vindication of the imperial record ... No one can study this lucid speech without feeling that the Colonial Empire is already progressing, no doubt by slow and sometimes faltering steps, on the way along which its most vigorous critics, at home and abroad would marshal it. It moves forward self-government in politics, towards the recognition of a universal community of interest, uniting senior and junior partners, in economic well-being ... by his own abstention from developing the theme Lord Cranborne emphasised the special duty which falls to the new Secretary of State, the duty of integrating the future of the colonies with that which has been planned for the United Nations and the world under the Atlantic Charter. But the first condition of British colonial progress is the continuity of administration in Whitehall and its protection against changes designed to meet the minor exigencies of political adjustment.<sup>93</sup>

The MOI arranged for Cranborne's speech to be published by Oxford University Press as an Oxford pamphlet.<sup>94</sup>

Six days after Cranborne's speech in the House of

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<sup>90</sup> ibid., col.416, my emphasis added.

<sup>91</sup> ibid., col.420.

<sup>92</sup> PRO, C0875/16/15/file.

<sup>93</sup> The Times, 4 December 1942.

<sup>94</sup> PRO, C0875/15/6, Meeting about Colonial Publicity in the United Kingdom, 13 January 1943.

Lords the Cabinet discussed a joint memorandum produced by Attlee, Cranborne, Eden and Stanley on the British draft of the 'Colonial Charter'. The memorandum set out the British case for issuing a statement on colonial policy. A statement had become necessary 'if only to enable us to keep the initiative in our hands'. In the first place the memorandum noted the 'widespread' and 'misguided' American attitude that there was 'something archaic in the conception of the British Colonial Empire and that some new system ought to be substituted for it more in accordance with the spirit of the times'. American criticism was thought to be completely ignorant of the conditions in Britain's colonial empire. As part of a re-education process it was hoped that Cranborne's speech would contribute to the 'enlightenment' of American opinion.<sup>95</sup> Second, it was noted that the 'enlightenment' of American opinion was only one of the factors which influenced their argument in favour of issuing a statement. Britain also sought to obtain specific commitments from the American government, namely a willingness to 'enter some general defence scheme which would include the defence of Colonial areas', to commit the United States to the principle 'that we and other Colonial powers concerned should have the unquestioned right to administer our own Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated territories, including those which we have temporarily lost to the Japanese' and to 'achieve a crystallisation in a form not unfavourable to ourselves of the existing vague but widely-held theories regarding colonies'.

The draft British statement emphasised Cranborne's idea of developing the idea of regional cooperation as a counter to American ideas of trusteeship schemes. It also emphasised the obligations of 'Parent states' to cooperate in effective defensive arrangements as an essential first step before the development of political and social institutions could be contemplated. The goal was to help the colonies to reach the stage when they would be 'capable of discharging in due course the full responsibilities of

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<sup>95</sup> PRO, FO371/31527/U1734, W.P.(42)544, 5 December 1942.



government'. There would, however, be no commitment to a timetable of political development or any mention of the word 'independence'.<sup>96</sup> It was hoped that 'by linking progressive thinking about social and economic development with the trend towards larger units, it would be possible to forge a viable position which avoided the rocks of international administration on the one hand, and the whirlpool of political independence on the other'.<sup>97</sup> The Cabinet approved the draft which was sent to Lord Halifax to give to Hull in February 1943.<sup>98</sup>

The American response received in April 1943 'effectively ruled out the possibility of a joint declaration'.<sup>99</sup> It seemed the Colonial Office's worst fears about the kind of 'Colonial Charter' acceptable to the United States had been realised. The American version implied the full application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies and it included timetables, independence and international administration. In May the British objections to the American draft were given to the American Ambassador, John Winant, but no response to the British objections was received. Instead, the possibility of the British making a unilateral declaration on the basis of the British draft agreed in Cabinet was discussed.<sup>100</sup>

#### Stanley's Speech to the House of Commons, July 1943

It was decided that Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, would use the opportunity presented by the colonial affairs supply debate scheduled for July 1943 to make a statement on British colonial policy which would both 'impress Parliament' and be 'a means of

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<sup>96</sup> ibid. C.f. Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.134.

<sup>97</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.135.

<sup>98</sup> PRO, FO371/31527/U1734, WCC(42)166, 9 December 1942.

<sup>99</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.138.

<sup>100</sup> Lee and Petter, op. cit., pp.138-9.

publicity for the Colonial Empire and in the Colonies'.<sup>101</sup> Oliver Stanley was well equipped for the job. Stanley had wide ministerial experience in the Home Office, the Ministry of Transport, Boards of Education and Trade and prior to his appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies, he had been Secretary of State for War and was number three in the Conservative Party hierarchy. He was regarded by some as a possible future Prime Minister until his untimely death at the age of 54 in 1950. His personality produced conflicting opinions. As Secretary of State during the critical period of post-war planning he had a private office reputation for being 'moody' (although this could be attributed to his cancer). Others thought him urbane, a man of considerable wit and intelligence with a sharp mind. Across the Atlantic the Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles thought him the 'most narrow, bigoted, reactionary Tory' he had met in his official career, while the President liked Stanley, he thought he was 'hard-boiled' but he felt 'there was a genuine streak of liberalism in him'.<sup>102</sup> Whatever the opinion of Stanley it is clear that he provided a strong defence of the British empire at a time when it was most vulnerable to the interference of outsiders. Looking back on his experience of dealing with the United States on colonial issues this becomes clear:

I suppose the Foreign Office were horrified ... that a colonial policy should be directed in the first place to the benefit of the Colonies and only after that to the appeasement of the United States.<sup>103</sup>

In accordance with the Cabinet's desire to keep the colonial declaration initiative in the hands of the British government, Stanley presented Parliament with a desideratum of British colonial policy which had an 'unequivocally progressive ring' and represented the 'fullest expression

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<sup>101</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.140.

<sup>102</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.71, Louis, op.cit., pp. 35-6 and Thorne, op.cit., p.595.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Louis, op.cit., p.36.



to date of the development vision'.<sup>104</sup>

It was not, said Stanley, his purpose to deal with the colonial war effort but to turn his attention to the questions arising from the practical preparations being made for peace. Stanley began his speech by endorsing the new version of the relationship between Britain and her the colonies, that of a progressive 'partnership':

The central purpose of our Colonial administration has often been proclaimed. It has been called the doctrine of trusteeship, although I think some of us feel now that word 'trustee' is rather too static in its connotation and that we should prefer to combine with the status of trustee the position also of partner.<sup>105</sup>

He insisted that an idea of 'ultimate self-rule did exist'<sup>106</sup>:

we are pledged to guide Colonial people along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire. We are pledged to build up their social and economic institutions, and we are pledged to develop their natural resources. Those objects have often been proclaimed and for me to proclaim them again today would be one more speech in a world where speeches now are rather as a discount and it is more deeds that count.<sup>107</sup>

He stated that he was not going to 'expound the theory of Colonial administration' but would 'give some account of the progress that we have made in the past and to outline some of the practical steps that we hope to take in the future'. In the past, the success of Britain's colonial administration had been measured in terms of the progress of political evolution in each territory. This, he suggested was, 'dangerous if... too narrowly interpreted'. If it was to succeed:

it has to have solid, social and economic foundations, and although without them spectacular political advances may draw for the authors the plaudits of the superficial, they will bring to those whom it is

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<sup>104</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., pp.162-3.

<sup>105</sup> Hansard, vol.391, col.48, 13 July 1943.

<sup>106</sup> David Goldsworthy, Colonial Issues in British Politics, 1945-1961, (Oxford, 1971), p.12.

<sup>107</sup> Hansard, vol. 391, col. 48, 13 July 1943.

designed to benefit nothing but disaster.<sup>108</sup>

This would not be a hurried process, but would be dependent on progress in social and economic fields:

It is no part of our policy to confer political advances which are unjustified by circumstances, or to grant self-government to those who are not yet trained in its use, but if we really mean as soon as practicable to develop self-government in these territories, it is up to us to see that circumstances as soon as possible justify political advances and to ensure that people are that as quickly as possible people are trained and equipped for eventual self-government.<sup>109</sup>

British colonial policy should not be judged merely on the basis of the progress of political reform but also on its success in producing viable states for self-government to be evolved to:

the real test of the sincerity and success of our Colonial policy is two-fold. It is not only the political advances that we make, but it is also, and I think more important, the steps that we are taking, economic and social as well as political, to prepare the people for further and future responsibilities.<sup>110</sup>

Stanley then outlined the development vision he had for the future of British colonial policy, a policy which would build on the commitments embodied in the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. He spoke of projected educational advances at both primary and secondary level, of encouraging the establishment of trades unions and cooperative movements, of colonial service reforms which would aid the policy already in place of encouraging the building of local government and administration to give the colonial populations the necessary experience in government. He also spoke about the economic vision for the colonies, the importance of building communications and transport infrastructures, of making the colonial economies self-supporting, with economies not purely based on agriculture or extractive industry but the development of secondary industries of processing and simple manufacture. This economic vision for the colonies reinforced his

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<sup>108</sup> ibid., col.49.

<sup>109</sup> ibid.

<sup>110</sup> ibid.



argument about political progress being dependent on secure social and economic foundations:

Our objective in the Colonial Empire must be to make the Colonies self-supporting. By 'self-supporting' I do not mean self-contained. I do not mean a narrow autarchy. I mean Colonies which are able to support an adequate and sound economic basis which will meet the needs of Government and peoples and which will give a reasonable standard of life. It is pretty clear that unless we succeed in doing this any talk about self-government is really humbug. There cannot be any real self-government if you are financially dependent. Political responsibility goes ill with financial dependence.<sup>111</sup>

The Labour Party's colonial expert Creech Jones questioned Stanley about more controversial subjects, the specific political problems facing British colonial policy makers like South African aspirations on the continent, ideas for a Pan African Conference, of settler demands in Kenya for a greater measure of white settlement, about the proposals for the amalgamation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, the question of the colour bar and the need for colonial representation in both municipal and central government.<sup>112</sup> A major problem confronting the British government, argued Creech Jones, was that together with heightened public interest in colonial affairs came suspicion: 'in the eyes of the world in the past, as well as in the eyes of the public here, we have not been altogether free from suspicion as to what we are up to in the territories in our control'.<sup>113</sup>

In general Creech Jones agreed with Stanley that the 'fundamental' issue facing the British government was 'the economic and social problem'.<sup>114</sup> He also used the now accepted mantra of a progressive colonial policy that of 'partnership':

I hope we shall give the Colonial Secretary all the encouragement and all the money he needs for the development of the programmes he has submitted to us

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<sup>111</sup> ibid., cols.63-4.

<sup>112</sup> ibid., cols. 72-5.

<sup>113</sup> ibid., col. 73.

<sup>114</sup> ibid., col.75.

today. I hope that by that means we will show that partnership with us is a privilege of service to people who are weaker and often more ignorant than ourselves and that by this help we can go forward with them to the full realisation of their freedom and well-being. Our real object, however, must always be to give a fuller life to all the peoples of the Colonies. We shall achieve that only when - if I may quote from a speech made at the Pacific Conference at Mount Tremblant<sup>115</sup> by a coloured speaker a few months ago: "When all our noble declarations of policy are translated into terms that the common man throughout the world can understand - peace, bread, a house, adequate clothing, education, good health and, above all, the right to walk with dignity on the world's great boulevards."<sup>116</sup>

Stanley's speech has been criticised for being insincere and unreal in that the government and Colonial Office doubted that some dependencies would ever be capable of self-government. Nor did it outline any practical means by which self-government could be achieved.<sup>117</sup> But if we look back at the climate of opinion and despondency which questioned whether the British empire had any future it is clear a remarkable turnabout had been achieved.

Stanley's speech had been successful in reaching a consensus in Parliament about the broad aims of British colonial policy which was acceptable to both the Coalition government and its Labour detractors.<sup>118</sup> It was also important in that the government appeared to have seized the initiative and made a statement on the future of colonial policy on the lines that had been proposed by the

<sup>115</sup> Institute of Pacific Relations Conference at Mount Tremblant, Quebec, 4-14 December 1942.

<sup>116</sup> Hansard, vol.391, col.81, 13 July 1943.

<sup>117</sup> See the criticisms made by Robert Pearce in 'The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonisation in Africa', African Affairs, 83, January 1984, p.80.

<sup>118</sup> The Colonial Office was pleased with the realistic approach of the Labour Party towards colonial affairs. For example in the Labour Party pamphlet, The Colonies published in 1943 showed how far the bipartisan approach had been achieved in its statement that 'political advance would be determined by progress in tackling social and economic problems: no longer was even lipservice paid to the notion of capitalistic exploitation and the document was virtually silent on the subject of political development'. C.f. Lee and Petter, op.cit., p159.



Ministers to the Cabinet in December of the previous year. The speech, with its:

opening invocation of the 'partnership' model, with its stress on social and economic development as the essential preparation for self-government, was the outward and visible sign of the [Colonial] Office's recognition that expectations had undergone a powerful change since the early days of the war.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, the speech was heralded by The Times as 'liberal and forward looking'.<sup>120</sup> The Foreign Office was angry at the Colonial Office's apparent lack of cooperation about the speech and the impact this would have on any hopes of resurrecting the possibility of a joint Anglo-American declaration.<sup>121</sup> The Colonial Office had however succeeded in making a statement which was heralded as progressive and had defended the fundamental right of the British government to administer the internal affairs of her empire.

The crisis was over. The colonial propagandists had received a 'green light' to embark on a positive publicity campaign about the future of the colonial empire for which they had been agitating for a long time. The propagandists now had in their armory the valuable addition of tangible war aims for British colonial policy. This new campaign aimed at creating the 'healthy' public opinion both in Britain and abroad that Sabine had been advocating and would be centred on the theme of 'partnership'.

The colonial issue did not disappear from the agenda of Anglo-American relations for the rest of the war. The international trusteeship issue consuming large amounts of Colonial Office time, but the Colonial Charter had died a

<sup>119</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.162.

<sup>120</sup> The Times, 14 July 1943.

<sup>121</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.141. As Alan Dudley commented, 'Colonel Stanley's recent statement in the House of Commons on Colonial policy ... came as a considerable surprise. Telegrams were received from Lord Halifax, and by the MOI, from Mr. Harold Butler, asking for explanations and complaining that the lack of preparation made publicity impossible. (Actually there was practically no mention of the statement in the American press. What little there was favourable ...)', PRO, FO371/34093/A8483, minute by Dudley, 28 July 1943.

natural death. From the crisis of 1942-3 the empire had struck back and was now morally rearmed with the new mission of partnership and this theme became the focus of colonial propaganda.



## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE COLONIAL PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN, 1943-45

Following Stanley's speech in Parliament the British empire would not be advertised but reinterpreted as a dynamic not dying empire with Britain working in 'partnership' for progress with her colonies. This new theme formed the basis of British propaganda to the end of the period under consideration. 'Partnership' proved to be a useful and versatile theme. It could satisfy both the requirements of the MOI and the Colonial Office. As part of the MOI's responsibility to conduct 'win the war propaganda', 'partnership' reflected the way in which the colonial empire and Britain cooperated to defeat the enemy. Similarly, 'partnership' also reflected the Colonial Office's requirement to 'win the peace'. A 'partnership' for progress would continue as the post-war model of the colonial empire's relationship with Britain. Emphasis was placed on how this 'partnership' would develop by projecting not empty promises and charters but the practical benefits of the colonies' association with Britain, such as development and welfare projects. Colonial publicity acknowledged that while the ultimate aim of Britain's colonial policy was self-government, this would not be granted until the colonies were in a position to be self-sufficient. Political advance would depend upon economic and social advances first. When economic, social and political developments were publicised the evolutionary and not revolutionary nature of Britain's colonial policy was always stressed. Had the revolutionary nature of Britain's colonial policy been emphasised this could have backfired and implied that there had indeed been something wrong with the policy of trusteeship.

Efforts were intensified to achieve the closest possible cooperation between the Colonial Office and the MOI to ensure the successful implementation of the new policy. Propaganda plans about the colonies were reviewed not only in terms of publicity to the colonies but also in

terms of publicity about the colonies in Britain.<sup>1</sup>

Propaganda about the empire received a more prominent place in MOI propaganda output. Cyril Radcliffe, the Director General of the MOI, identified two subjects that were 'looming up as important propaganda subjects for the rest of the war period and after': India and the colonies. In neither case did he feel that the MOI was tackling them properly.<sup>2</sup> The Colonial Office welcomed the new MOI impetus behind a more systematic approach to the problem.<sup>3</sup>

Problems had long been apparent in the liaison between the MOI and the Colonial Office. MOI officials had complained to the Colonial Office that the Colonial Office had sometimes adopted a 'too parochial view of publicity problems' and did 'not realise sufficiently their world importance'.<sup>4</sup> The Public Relations Officer at the Colonial Office, Noel Sabine disagreed. It was not the cooperation between the MOI and the Colonial Office which was at fault, but that the Colonial Office was often not informed about events which happened in the colonies which might have publicity value in Britain.<sup>5</sup> As one Public Relations Department official put it, 'it not so much "liaison" as a "publicity sense"' which the MOI found lacking in the Colonial Office.<sup>6</sup>

To remedy this state of affairs the Colonial Office sent a circular despatch to the colonies asking them to ensure that in the future the Colonial Office would be given advance information on events which were likely to become the subject of comment in Britain in order to avoid

<sup>1</sup> PRO, INF1/555, Grubb to Sabine 13 May 1942.

<sup>2</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Radcliffe to the Deputy Director of the MOI, 3 November 1942.

<sup>3</sup> PRO, INF1/555, Fraser to Grubb, 21 May 1942. In November 1942 Cranborne had expressed his determination to strengthen the staff of the Public Relations Department, Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.135.

<sup>4</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, note by Macmillan, 20 April 1942.

<sup>5</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, minute by Sabine, 27 April 1942.

<sup>6</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, minute by Gent, 27 April 1942.



'misunderstanding' and 'undesirable speculation'.<sup>7</sup>

One area identified as ripe for improvement was the MOI's internal organisation. Radcliffe wanted to remove the inconvenience of publicity divisions being organised territorially.<sup>8</sup> The Empire Division was also reinforced by a change in personnel. Gervas Huxley joined the Division as Honorary Adviser in December 1942 and became Director of the Empire Division in April 1943. The addition of Huxley was welcomed by the Colonial Office as he combined experience of professional public relations with colonial expertise.<sup>9</sup> Huxley was fortunate that his tenure as the Director of empire publicity at the MOI coincided with the new articulation of Britain's colonial policy of 'partnership' and in the wake of the MOI-Colonial Office agreement on the incorporation of long-term public relations as part of Britain's wartime propaganda. Therefore some of the reasons for Colonial Office dissatisfaction with the MOI's colonial propaganda had been removed before he became Director of the Empire Division. Nevertheless, the importance of personalities should not be overlooked. As we saw in chapter one the Colonial Office's lack of confidence in the personnel of the Empire Division undoubtedly had an impact on how some officials regarded propaganda and the extent to which they were willing to cooperate with the MOI. Because of his work for the EMB Huxley was a known quantity. He was not tainted with academia or amateurism and therefore inspired more confidence. As will be seen even with these advantages the impact of his energy and drive and his endeavours to make the relationship between the MOI and the Colonial Office a

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<sup>7</sup> PRO, CO875/14/12, circular despatch, 8 May 1942.

<sup>8</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Radcliffe to DDG, 3 November 1942.

<sup>9</sup> PRO, INF1/110. The appointment of Huxley was so successful in transforming the MOI approach, George Gater the Under-Secretary of State felt able to comment that there had never been such an excellent response from the MOI and that in order to keep up with the output of the Empire Division the Colonial Office's Public Relations Department staff ought to be strengthened, c.f. CO875/14/11, minute by Gater, 21 May 1943.

happier one heralded a new and much improved era in the conduct of colonial propaganda.

Gervas Huxley had a distinguished pedigree in colonial publicity. He had joined the EMB in 1926 and in 1932 went to work for Ceylon's Tea Board where he was responsible for the film Song of Ceylon. Huxley had visited the United States every year where he learned the art of public relations. He had been involved informally as an advisor to the MOI while continuing his job with the Tea Board. Through his friendship with Cyril Radcliffe he overcame his reluctance to work in an executive position within the MOI when he became director of the Empire Division. He was under no illusions about government attitudes to public relations, which he considered, 'surrounded by ignorance and prejudice' and that publicists were often thought of as 'charlatans'. In his autobiography he recalled the attitude of Sir Edward Harding, his brother-in-law and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions Office. Harding told Huxley, 'in all seriousness',

that his Information Officer was so good at his job of keeping the Press away from the Department and its work that there had not been a mention of it in the Press for the last twelve months.<sup>10</sup>

In the first place Huxley tried to improve the relationship between departments and organisations concerned with colonial propaganda. Huxley considered that the Empire Division was in a 'mess' when he took up his position in 1943, but that the state of the Colonial Section was even worse. The Colonial Section appeared to be in 'a permanent state of warfare' with the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office, which was in turn handicapped by the 'hostility' of senior men in the Colonial Office 'to any form of publicity'. Relations between the BBC and the Colonial Office had reached a 'complete impasse' as the BBC refused to broadcast material supplied by the Colonial Office as it was considered 'quite

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<sup>10</sup> Gervas Huxley, Both Hands: An Autobiography, (London, 1970), pp.123, 196 and 190. For Huxley and the Empire Marketing Board c.f. Lee, 'The Dissolution of the Empire Marketing Board ...', p.53.



unsuited for effective broadcasting'.<sup>11</sup>

The MOI also addressed the danger of overlap and the duplication of effort. Under Huxley's leadership the organisation was centralised. While the Empire Division conducted propaganda to the colonies, a separate unit in the Home Division under Vincent Harlow conducted propaganda to the British public about the colonies. Unlike some in the Colonial Office, Huxley held Harlow in high esteem and thought him an 'invaluable ally'.<sup>12</sup> Huxley wanted Harlow's unit to move to the Empire Division to remove the complications caused in relations with the Colonial Office by having several channels of communication. Furthermore, 'at least 75% of all that Professor Harlow (in Home Division) is doing for the projection of the Empire to the United Kingdom is of the closest interest in the projection of the Empire overseas'. Therefore Huxley recommended the enlargement of Harlow's unit into an 'Empire Projection Unit' within the Empire Division.<sup>13</sup> Harlow moved back to the Empire Division as head of the Empire Information Service to conduct 'long-term publicity about the Empire at home and overseas'.<sup>14</sup> The terms of reference for Harlow's unit under Huxley's supervision became 'a) the planning and initiation of long term publicity about the Empire through all territorial departments and b) the collection, editing and passing of all long term publicity material'.<sup>15</sup>

The Empire Division of the MOI also improved cooperation with the Colonial Office by the institution of three weekly meetings, one with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, one with the staff of the Public Relations

<sup>11</sup> ibid., pp.207-8.

<sup>12</sup> Huxley, op.cit., p.207.

<sup>13</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Huxley to Grubb, 28 June 1943.

<sup>14</sup> PRO, INF1/110, Office circular, no.210, 'Publicity about the Empire', 18 August 1943. The Foreign Office while doubtful of Harlow's abilities as an administrator had little doubt about his 'enthusiasm'. PRO, FO371/34095/A10367, minute by Dudley, 15 November 1943.

<sup>15</sup> PRO, FO371/34093/A6758, Huxley to Dudley, 26 August 1943.

Department of the Colonial Office and the 'Huxley Committee' which sat to coordinate empire, British and American propaganda about the India and the colonies.<sup>16</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, also held weekly meetings with representatives of the BBC Overseas Service and the Director of the Empire Division of the MOI.<sup>17</sup>

In order to contribute to an expansion in the publicity effort about the colonies the Colonial Office also improved its organisation. It was suggested that the staff of the Press Office should be increased. Since November 1940 the Colonial Office's Press Office had been successful in increasing the number of press handouts it produced which had in turn resulted in a significant increase in column inches devoted to colonial affairs in the British press.<sup>18</sup> The staff of the Press Office began to think of post-war requirements. They felt that steps should be undertaken to ensure that material received from the colonies could be more rapidly converted into press releases for the British press. As potentially one of the 'most hopeful post-war activities', A.J.H. Halper wanted the appointment of at least one press officer to be appointed to specialise in the writing and placement of background material for trade papers and periodicals. It was noted that there had been recent developments to interest the trade press in the colonies and the Press Office sought to increase this kind of work.<sup>19</sup> The Press Office also wanted to continue the tradition of appointing

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<sup>16</sup> PRO, INF1/110, minute by Rawdon Smith, 11 January 1943.

<sup>17</sup> PRO, CO875/17/10, Stanley to Bracken, 17 December 1942.

<sup>18</sup> PRO, CO875/16/10, Halper to Sabine, 28 February 1943; the comparative figures were as follows:

	'Hand-outs'	Results	Inches
November, 1940:	30	12	16
December, 1940:	31	8	14
November, 1942:	40	77	135
December, 1942;	62	80	238

<sup>19</sup> PRO, CO875/16/10, minute by Halper, 24 August 1942.



Press Officers with journalistic experience.<sup>20</sup>

#### Organisation In Africa

A more concerted effort was made to improve propaganda organisation in Africa itself. Once again the idea of appointing a coordinating Information Officer for East Africa was considered. The General Officer Commanding in East Africa suggested appointing a Principal Information Officer as an agent of the MOI who would be located in Nairobi and who would oversee and coordinate the various organisations involved in propaganda in the region, both civilian and military.<sup>21</sup> The MOI thought the Colonial Office would object to the idea as they had done when a similar post had been proposed for the West Indies and West Africa.<sup>22</sup> The Colonial Office was aware of the implications of such an appointment was concerned that this development might infringe on the Secretary of State for the Colonies control of all matters concerning the territories for which he was responsible. The Principal Information Officer might be put in a difficult position if he received directives from both London and the military organisation in Cairo.<sup>23</sup>

Mervyn Hill, the Information Officer in Kenya, was suggested for the post of new Principal Information Officer. The Colonial Office withdrew its objections to

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<sup>20</sup> The staff of the Colonial Office Press Office in early 1942 consisted of four Press Officers. Kenneth Williams had been the editor of Great Britain and the East; Fenn Sherie had been an assistant editor of the Humorist, the Royal and the Strand and had considerable experience as a freelancer in North Africa, the United States and Europe; A.J.H. Haler had spent two years working for Reuters, two years in newspapers in East and Southern Africa and with the Associated Press and H.L. Collins had spent eight years working for the Daily Herald, ibid., Sabine to Rawdon Smith, 16 March 1942.

<sup>21</sup> PRO, C0875/9/17, MOI notes for a meeting with Colonial Office on propaganda in East Africa, 19 September 1941.

<sup>22</sup> PRO, INF1/552, minute by Harlow, 9 September 1941.

<sup>23</sup> PRO, C0875/9/17, Sabine to Leigh Ashton, 11 October 1941.

the new post as long as it was understood that it did not prejudice discussions with the MOI of sending less standardised material to the colonies and that the PIO's main task would be the supervision of propaganda designed primarily for Africans.<sup>24</sup> Mervyn Hill, however, was ruled out following his resignation from the post of Information Officer in Kenya resulting from 'irregularities' which had occurred while he was Honorary Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society.<sup>25</sup> Instead the GOC in East Africa suggested Sir Geoffrey Northcote, the former Governor of Hong Kong.<sup>26</sup>

Thereafter discussions continued about the PIO's terms of reference. This left two unresolved questions: first, 'who exactly are the Information Officers to be coordinated?' and second, 'does coordination mean control or voluntary collaboration?'.<sup>27</sup> The Colonial Office preferred that the PIO should coordinate and not control the activities of the East African and Occupied Enemy Territories Information Officers in order to preserve the Secretary of State for the Colonies's overall responsibility.<sup>28</sup> Northcote took up his appointment in January 1942 as a MOI coordinator of propaganda activities in East Africa. At this time the Colonial Office was optimistic as relations between the Colonial Office and the MOI were now on a 'happier basis' in general and this new development 'should be extremely to the good'.<sup>29</sup>

#### Huxley's Publicity Directive

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<sup>24</sup> PRO, C0875/9/17, Colonial Office to Kenya, 26 September 1941.

<sup>25</sup> PRO, C0875/9/17, Kenya to Colonial Office, 1 November 1941.

<sup>26</sup> PRO, C0875/9/17, GOC in Chief, East Africa to WO, 14 November 1941.

<sup>27</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, minute by Edmett, 10 December 1941.

<sup>28</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, Colonial Office to Kenya, 27 December 1941.

<sup>29</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, minute by Sabine, 9 January 1942.



With relations between the Colonial Office and the MOI on an improved footing, colonial publicists were able to focus their activities around propaganda for the new theme of 'partnership'.<sup>30</sup> At home the aim would be to break through the 'crust of boredom and indifference' about the British empire where 'ties of kinship' were 'largely absent'. Apart from Kenya and the Rhodesias and a few isolated communities, the modern colonial empire consisted almost entirely of 'non-British stock with a preponderance of coloured races'.<sup>31</sup>

The new colonial mission was one of dynamic partnership between Britain and her colonies 'in progress towards self-governing institutions in the political sphere and towards a better and fuller life in the economic and social spheres'.<sup>32</sup> Although the 'declared policy of furthering progress towards self-government was to be expounded', the main emphasis was to be on 'the gigantic task which H.M.G. had undertaken in raising the physical, cultural and economic standards of backward and primitive peoples and on the responsibility which the citizens of this country bore in the matter'.<sup>33</sup> The emphasis of propaganda would be on the economic and social and not the political aspects of partnership. As Huxley stated in his directive on colonial publicity:

Important as are the efforts being made to fit Africans for eventual self-government, it is on the economic and social aspects of the partnership that chief stress is being laid for the practical purpose of most effectively projecting the partnership theme; on health services - the war against malaria, hookworm, the tsetse fly etc.; on education; on economic progress - the war against crop pests and animal diseases, the preservation of the soil and agricultural development and better nutrition, the development of suitable secondary industries, on transport and communications. In all these technical aspects of the partnership theme there is a wealth of

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<sup>30</sup> PRO, C0875/19/13, note on a long-term publicity meeting, 2 June 1942.

<sup>31</sup> PRO, C0875/14/10, Harlow to Gater, 3 September 1942.

<sup>32</sup> PRO, INF1/356, Huxley's directive, 24 May 1943.

<sup>33</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, Huxley's memorandum, 18 May 1943.

human material if challengingly presented, closely linked to the lives and experiences of our own people, and showing how men and women of our own race are actively helping to improve conditions and to get the African to play an increasing part in helping himself to better his position, this theme should rouse a new interest and responsibility in our own partnership with the peoples of the colonies and should thus help to create that live and informed public opinion that is essential to provide the sustained driving force behind the new government policy of colonial development and expenditure.<sup>34</sup>

This was directly in line with Colonial Office thought that a more forward colonial publicity campaign was required. Indeed Britain's very status as a world power was at stake. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, Sir George Gater had written to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Director General of the MOI that the colonial empire was 'so important to the world influence of the mother country that no effort should be spared to maintain our position'.<sup>35</sup>

It was decided, however, that 'no useful or lasting effect would be produced by an advertising campaign'. What Huxley envisioned was a 'sustained long-term effort in education - using that word in its widest sense'.<sup>36</sup> In this new effort a large and diverse amount of material was prepared not merely for the MOI's own purposes but also 'for the educational activities of Voluntary Bodies of all kinds and of the Churches and for Schools, as well as for publication in general and specialised papers and magazines'.<sup>37</sup>

#### The Appeal to British Youth

British youth was targeted through cooperation with the Board of Education and youth organisations. A MOI-Board of Education liaison Committee was set up. Greater awareness of the colonial empire was linked with post-war

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<sup>34</sup> PRO, INF1/356, Huxley's directive, 24 May 1943.

<sup>35</sup> PRO, CO875/19/2, Gater to Radcliffe, 14 October 1942.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, memorandum by Huxley, 18 May 1943.

<sup>37</sup> PRO, INF1/356, Huxley's directive, 24 May 1943.



opportunities in the colonial service. It was felt that 'one of the root causes of present-day ignorance and lack of interest in the British Empire has been the totally inadequate character of the teaching of the subject in the schools'. In the first place the emphasis was on 'teaching the teachers'. A special conference organised by the Board of Education was held in London in November 1942 on the teaching of imperial history and 'its contemporary problems' based on a syllabus prepared by the MOI. Similar conferences were held during 1943 and 1944 in other parts of the country. A joint MOI-Royal Empire Society scheme was also initiated which provided secondary and public schools with lecturers on the Empire. The Board of Education also considered material produced by the MOI, including, pamphlets, handbooks, posters, maps, etc. If the item was approved by the Board of Education around 35,000 copies were supplied to schools, Teachers' Training Colleges, youth organisations and evening institutes. The Rhodes Trust made a grant of one thousand pounds to enable the YMCA to undertake educational work about the colonies throughout the country and invited the YMCA to hold a briefing conference for their club leaders at Rhodes House, Oxford.<sup>38</sup> Regional Empire Youth conferences were also organised by the Colonial Office and the MOI. Posters, wallcharts and a 'British Commonwealth of Nations' map were distributed free to youth organisations and voluntary bodies.<sup>39</sup> The Colonial Office arranged for a series of twelve 2,000 word articles on the empire to be written for the teachers' magazine, the Schoolmaster.<sup>40</sup> Other articles on the colonies were produced for the Teacher's World and the Colonial Office discussed a post-war project for

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<sup>38</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, Memorandum by Huxley, 18 May 1943.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, minute by Sabine, 19 May 1943.

<sup>40</sup> PRO, C0875/15/6, Committee on Colonial Publicity in the United Kingdom, 6 January 1943.

teachers to visit colonies.<sup>41</sup>

The Empire Information Service of the MOI initiated other activities to influence British youth which included the supply of material to and participation in weekend conferences of the National Association of Boys' Clubs and the National Association of Girls' Clubs. A special programme for study and discussion was prepared for the National Association of Training Corps for Girls on the subject of 'Nation-building in the British Commonwealth and Empire'. Contact was made with the pre-service organisations, the Sea Cadets, the Air Training Corps and the Army Cadet Force. A series of lectures was prepared to be held at the London headquarters of the Girl Guides Association. A series of articles on the empire was supplied for publication in The Guider and a special 'Empire Information' badge was instituted. Similar arrangements were made for the Boy Scouts' Association.<sup>42</sup> The Empire Information Service also offered The Children's Newspaper a regular selection of short features.<sup>43</sup>

One of the publications distributed to educational groups and organisations was Kenneth Bradley's Diary of a District Officer. Although published privately, the MOI took steps to ensure that it received paper allocation to help in its publication.<sup>44</sup> Bradley was the former Information Officer in Northern Rhodesia, 1939-42 and went on to be Colonial and Financial Secretary of the Falkland Islands. Before he became Information Officer, Bradley had

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<sup>41</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, sub-committee on colonial publicity in the educational field of the committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 13 January 1943.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Progress Report from the Empire Information Service of the MOI, 1 September to 30 November, 1943.

<sup>43</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Kamm to Harlow, 4 November 1943. For example between November 1944 and February 1945 the newspaper published twenty feature articles dealing with 'the activities of children in different parts of the Empire, including items on social and economic progress and details of the Empire's war effort', PRO, CO875/21/1, Empire Information Service Progress Report, 1 November 1944 - 28 February 1945.

<sup>44</sup> PRO, CO875/14/10, minute by Sabine 20 July 1942.



been a District Officer in Northern Rhodesia for thirteen years. In Diary of a District Officer he lucidly portrayed life in the Colonial Service and described nearly a year in his life of travelling around his area of responsibility and visiting villages accompanied by his dog and faithful African guides. He presented the beauty of Africa, its flora and fauna and its people and the humour of his daily duties as District Officer.<sup>45</sup>

Bradley's Diary of a District Officer was critically acclaimed at the time. For example, a review in Empire the journal of the FCB commended it for making 'the atmosphere real to his readers' as the pages were packed with 'many vividly realised landscapes and convincing human portraits'.<sup>46</sup> The public agreed. Bradley's book was so successful that the first edition sold more than 100,000 copies.<sup>47</sup> It also became required reading for young Colonial Service cadets. As the historian and former Colonial Service officer who served in Nigeria, Anthony Kirk-Greene later noted he knew virtually nothing about the Colonial Service before his appointment and until he read Bradley's book thought a District Officer was 'a male variant of the district nurse'.<sup>48</sup>

Bradley's literary career continued. He went on to a post-war career as a publicity officer in the Colonial Office as the editor of the colonial service's morale-boosting magazine Corona.<sup>49</sup>

The Colonial Office sought to capitalise on the publicity efforts undertaken to educate British youth about the colonies by linking this to post-war opportunities in

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<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Bradley, Diary of a District Officer (London, 1942), passim.

<sup>46</sup> Empire, May 1943.

<sup>47</sup> PRO, C0875/15/6, Committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 17 March 1943.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Charles Allen (ed.), Tales From the Dark Continent: Images of British Colonial Africa in the Twentieth Century (London, 1979), p.43.

<sup>49</sup> For Kenneth Bradley's editorship of Corona, c.f. PRO, C0875/29/2/file; C0875/29/3/file and C0875/58/1/file.

the Colonial Service. The Colonial Office noted the encouraging response of British youth in considering a career in the Colonial Service. For example, a frequent question asked as a result of the Empire Youth Conference held in Newcastle at the end of 1943 had been 'How can I be of service?'<sup>50</sup> Similarly, it was also considered a matter of urgency to 'interest potential candidates serving with the Forces' in a post-war Colonial Service career.<sup>51</sup>

Ralph Furse, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State chiefly responsible for colonial service recruitment agreed that it was the moment to take the initiative in a comprehensive publicity effort for post-war recruitment. The young were the Colonial Office's main target. Furse thought the Colonial Office should exploit the feeling which existed in the country of 'How can I make a better world?' and 'Where can I help?'. The Colonial Service was a vocational profession and this should be emphasised as it was the main 'trump card in competing with business and other professions which can offer "glittering prizes"'.<sup>52</sup>

#### Publications

Vincent Harlow, the Director of the Empire Information Services, wrote a booklet The British Colonial Empire and the British Public, which explained the evolution of the relationship between Britain and the colonies and emphasised the responsibility the British public had towards the colonial peoples in partnership. He suggested that 'pride of possession as regards the Empire' was 'a dead sentiment - and rightly so'. Instead 'pride in progress' could become 'a national exhilarating emotion'. The relationship was not one of Britain exploiting the colonies, indeed Britain had abolished the slave trade in the colonies. It was a 'senior - junior partnership' exhibiting the essential feature of a partnership:

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<sup>50</sup> PRO, CO875/19/22, minute by Thomas, 3 November 1943.

<sup>51</sup> PRO, CO875/19/22, minute by Jeffries, 22 October 1943.

<sup>52</sup> PRO, CO875/19/22, minute by Furse, 7 February 1944.



'voluntary collaboration for mutual benefit'. Using the example of the findings of Lord Hailey's African Survey, Harlow noted that Africans had in the past been held down by 'a dead weight of poverty, ignorance and tropical pestilence' which was 'beyond their capacity to alleviate'. This was where Britain would help. The 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act was only the first instalment of Britain's moral obligation to bring progress to the colonies and help them to stand on their own feet. In combining the new theme of partnership with a new sense of an imperial mission, Harlow concluded with a cri de coeur:

The war has taught us a new sense of community or partnership between sections and classes. Step by step we have come to accept a similar relationship between ourselves as a whole and the peoples of the Dependencies. Prove to an Englishman that this colonial partnership, to which we have set our hands, is a pioneer job of almost daunting dimensions and that it is an integral part of the evolving British tradition for which he is now fighting, and he will not be slow to respond to its challenge.

Unlike some of Harlow's previous efforts the Colonial Office was on the whole pleased with his booklet which was seen as a 'most helpful piece of work'. One critic, however, felt that rather more prominence to 'exploitation' had been made than he would have preferred.<sup>53</sup> It was considered that this resulted from Harlow's inclination to allow his 'undoubted liberality of mind to impart a slightly apologetic attitude into his approach to colonial propaganda'.<sup>54</sup>

Following on the success of a MOI pamphlet, 50 Facts about India, particularly in the United States, the Empire Information Service of the MOI decided to produce a similar pamphlet about the colonies to be followed by others in the 50 Facts... series covering individual areas, such as Malaya, the West Indies, West Africa and East Africa.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> PRO, C0875/15/14, Vincent Harlow, The British Colonial Empire and the British Public; Keating to Harlow, 17 May 1943; minute by Lloyd, 10 May 1943.

<sup>54</sup> PRO, C0875/14/10, minute by Sabine, 20 July 1942.

<sup>55</sup> PRO, C0875/19/1, note of a meeting with the Colonial Office, 26 January 1944.

The more general pamphlet 50 Facts about the Colonies aimed to correct misconceptions about Britain's colonial policy both in Britain and in the United States while at the same time promoting the new policy of 'partnership'. For example, the pamphlet explained the objectives of British colonial policy in its new incarnation. That it was also intended for an American audience was apparent in the words and images employed. 'Fact 9' stated that the aim of British colonial policy was to train colonial peoples in the art of self-government and accepted President Lincoln's ideal: 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people', as soon as possible 'by the people'.<sup>56</sup> 'Fact 10' stated that immediate 'Government by the people' was not possible in every colony as they were at different stages of development, ranging from countries with elaborate parliamentary constitutions to small ocean outposts directly administered by British officials. The speed of political advance depended 'on cultural and economic progress, which it is the declared aim of British policy to foster'.<sup>57</sup> 'Fact 13' sought to draw comparisons with the United States (while also at the same time reminding Americans that Britain was not the only colonial power), stated that until the point where self-government could be achieved 'the people of Britain, through Parliament', remained 'ultimately responsible for the government of the whole Colonial Empire, just as the people of the United States are ultimately responsible for their outlying dependencies'.<sup>58</sup> 'Fact 16' articulated the partnership ideal as a replacement of trusteeship. Partnership was thought up by the people of Britain themselves as a better expression of the relationship: 'the people of the Colonies are partners with the people of the United Kingdom and of India and the Dominions in the British Commonwealth

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<sup>56</sup> PRO, FO371/34088/A10885, 50 Facts About the Colonies, October 1943.

<sup>57</sup> ibid.

<sup>58</sup> ibid.



and Empire'.<sup>59</sup>

The pamphlet continued by outlining the lead Britain was giving the colonies in preparing them for eventual self-government. 'Fact 17' outlined progress at the local level based 'on the tribal, clan, or village organisations' and the experience gained for example, 'Local native administrations raise taxes which they themselves spend on education and the medical services'.<sup>60</sup> 'Fact 18' exaggerated reality by suggesting that 'the great majority of officials in Government service are recruited from the local inhabitants' and 'in Africa the numbers of African judges, administrative and professional officers are steadily increasing'.<sup>61</sup>

The pamphlet produced mixed reaction in the American Department of the Foreign Office. Alan Dudley, former Director of the BIS commented that the pamphlet left him 'cold' and that, while it might 'provide the specific answers to criticisms', it was not the 'basis for missionary work'. Angus Malcolm, who had served in the Washington Embassy, 1938-42 thought, however, that the pamphlet was correct in sticking to the facts and not making 'direct general assertions about the "loyalty" of the Colonies, or the "benefits" which "mankind" derives from our Colonial Empire'.<sup>62</sup>

Cooperation was also encouraged with other bodies like the Workers Education Association. The WEA had produced The Colonial Empire: a Students Guide. Lord Hailey criticised its publication as 'undesirable' because it contained 'malicious suggestions',<sup>63</sup> such as 'is it true to describe the Empire as a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the British governing classes' and questioned whether the concept of 'trusteeship' had any basis in reality, or

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<sup>59</sup> ibid.

<sup>60</sup> ibid.

<sup>61</sup> ibid.

<sup>62</sup> PRO, FO371/34088/2728, minutes by Dudley and Malcolm, 22 March 1943.

<sup>63</sup> PRO, CO875/16/7, minute by Hailey, 16 June 1943.

was 'a piece of humbug and self-justification on our part'. The book directly attacked British colonial policy in Africa by stating:

If among other war aims we are fighting to destroy the pernicious racial theories and practices of the Nazis, can we honestly maintain a policy of racial discrimination (such as implicit in the system of Native Reserves established in e.g. Southern Rhodesia or Kenya) in our African colonies?<sup>64</sup>

The Colonial Office objected to these 'unhelpful ... half-truths ... regrettable ignorance and class bias' and Sabine noted the irony that the WEA was subsidised by the Board of Education.<sup>65</sup> Harlow thought that it would be worthwhile to approach Green, the General Secretary of the WEA, whom he considered to be a 'reasonable person', and suggest that the MOI would produce for them another book on the colonial empire which would provide a necessary corrective by stressing 'the magnitude of our obligations and the responsibility of the citizen in this country'.<sup>66</sup>

The Army Education Council and the ABCA collaborated with the MOI to produce material about the empire to guide Education Officers and Sergeant Instructors. MOI printed material was used in conjunction with joint productions of material such as a series of illustrated 'wall-sheets' on empire subjects.<sup>67</sup> The ABCA approached the MOI to produce a book on the colonies, recognising that the Army was an important audience because they were the 'most representative cross-section of the community'. It was agreed that Harlow would write a pamphlet, The Ladder of Self-Government, in the empire series titled 'The British Way and Purpose'.<sup>68</sup>

Harlow explained the process of the evolution of self-government in the colonies. From the gradual transfer of

<sup>64</sup> ibid., T.L. Hodgkin, The Colonial Empire: a Students' Guide, p.22, p.32 and p.14.

<sup>65</sup> PRO, C0875/16/7, minute by McLean, 22 June 1943 and minute by Sabine, 24 June 1943.

<sup>66</sup> PRO, C0875/16/7, minute by Harlow, 25 June 1943.

<sup>67</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, Huxley memorandum, 18 May 1943.

<sup>68</sup> PRO, C0875/14/19, Thomas to Harlow, 14 December 1943.



responsible government from the Governor first to a nominated council then to an executive council and legislative council, to a representative government and finally to responsible government. He was careful to avoid any reference to actual timetables for the transfer of power. Not all the territories in the colonial empire were on the same rung of the ladder to self-government. As Harlow noted:

A large area (say in Africa) inhabited by very primitive people may require a very long process of social and economic build-up before they are ready for a substantial political advance.

For in the final analysis, a 'vote will not fill an empty stomach'.<sup>69</sup>

In another area of adult education which had expanded during the war, the MOI cooperated with the National Fire Service in its discussion groups on current problems.<sup>70</sup> London Fire Stations organised a course of 600 lecture-discussions on citizenship 'in which Britain's imperial responsibilities had a prominent part'.<sup>70</sup>

The MOI provided its 14 Regional Offices with speakers on colonial subjects for many different kinds of public meetings: in town halls, cinemas, Rotary Clubs and 'between-shift factory talks'. Colonial Service officers on leave in Britain were encouraged to give lectures about their experiences in the colonies and a regional census of ex-Colonial Service officials was made in order to increase the supply of colonial speakers. The number of meetings on colonial subjects had increased sharply from 479 in the period from April to September 1942 to 1,170 for the period October 1942 to March 1943.<sup>71</sup> During 1943 there were 4,411 lectures on colonial subjects, rising to 5,630 in 1944.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> PRO, CO87514/19, Vincent Harlow, The Ladder of Self-Government.

<sup>70</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, Huxley memorandum, 18 May 1943.

<sup>71</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, Huxley memorandum, 18 May 1943; CO875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 12 February 1943.

<sup>72</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, Progress Report of the Empire Information Service, 1 November 1944 - 28 February 1945.

## Targeting Women

The colonial publicity effort also targeted women. Lady Bella Southorn was the MOI's liaison officer with womens' periodicals. Lady Southorn had an interesting colonial background. Her second husband was Sir Thomas Southorn, a recently retired Governor of the Gambia. She was the daughter of the barrister Sidney Woolf and sister of Leonard Woolf, the editor of the Political Quarterly, the founder of the Hogarth Press, the Secretary of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions and prolific writer on colonial issues. She was also, therefore sister-in-law to Virginia Woolf. Lady Southorn supplied the womens' periodicals with feature articles and photographs from East Africa which illustrated the war effort of women in the colonies. From Kenya, Elyeen Harrold supplied a number of articles including 'the East African Womens' League in Wartime', 'the MOI in Nairobi-Kenya Women in War Work', 'The Establishment of the Military Nursing Service', 'Women of the Red Cross Service in Kenya Colony', 'An Indian Maternity Home in Nairobi', 'the Training of Army Cooks in Kenya' and 'The Birth of an African Hospital'.<sup>73</sup> By July 1943 Lady Southorn was placing the articles of fifteen women correspondents appointed by governors in the colonies. In the period October 1942 to July 1943 Lady Southorn successfully placed a number of articles in the women's press with an East and Central African background. These included an article by Mrs. L.B. Freeston (wife of the Information Officer) of Tanganyika, 'My Day', in Homes and Gardens; 'Welfare in a Gold Mine in Kenya', 'Indian Women Learn First-Aid in Kenya', 'Nursery School in Kenya', 'Masai Man and Child' and 'War Workers' Hostel in Kenya' in the Nursing Mirror; 'Women's War Work in Kenya', 'Women's War Work in Northern Rhodesia' and 'Scrapbooks' by Mrs. Freeston in the Lady and 'Wild Flowers of Northern Rhodesia', 'Busy Bees of Africa'

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<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0875/14/11, undated report for the Secretary of State on colonial publicity activities; C0875/16/12 and for details about the supply of photographs from East Africa, C0875/17/12/file.



and 'Asian Guides in Kenya' for Girl's Own. Lady Southorn also arranged for the production of a special Empire Day edition of Girl's Own for May 1944 for which she wrote a general article on the 'Empire family'. Lady Southorn also contributed to the Crown Colonist and was a representative on the overseas committee of the Girl Guides.<sup>74</sup>

#### Pamphlets

Huxley suggested that the MOI should produce a series of pamphlets of 2500 words in length on 'How the Other Half Lives'. This was specifically designed to illustrate the individual aspects of the 'partnership' theme in a lively manner. Examples included, A Day in the Life of a Ugandan Cotton Grower, A Day in the Life of an African Member of a Legislative Council, A Day in the Life of a District Commissioner.<sup>75</sup> He suggested that they should seek to achieve an authentic feeling by enlisting the talents of the most imaginative Information Officers on the spot to choose the most suitable individuals in their territories. It was hoped that a personal appeal to British youth would be made by illustrating the jobs of individual Africans and how in their daily lives they worked in cooperation with Europeans. For example, in the pamphlet A Day in the Life of a District Commissioner, the aim was to 'get over the effect of a man actually writing it as he sits in his bungalow perspiring at the end of the day's work that he is describing'.<sup>76</sup> It was decided that Michael Varvill would write the pamphlet. Varvill had been seconded to the Colonial Office from Nigeria where he served since 1932 and continued to serve there after the war until his retirement when Nigeria became independent. He had already broadcast on the BBC on the subject of life as a District

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<sup>74</sup> PRO, CO875/17/15, minute by Bella Southorn, 3 July 1943 and her report on liaison with the women's press from 19 October 1942 to 19 July 1943.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Huxley to Sabine, 4 May 1943.

<sup>76</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Huxley to Keating, 31 May 1943.

Commissioner.<sup>77</sup> For other authors the Colonial Office cabled colonies in Africa for other 'word pictures' of life in the colonies.<sup>78</sup>

The idea met some opposition. It was feared that there was a danger that the British public might receive a false impression of life in the colonies and an unrealistic appreciation of their problems. The title 'How the Other Half Lives...' was also criticised for being 'patronising' and it was feared it would be resented in the colonies.<sup>79</sup> Notwithstanding this criticism the Colonial Office felt that the project should proceed. It was pointed out that the title of the series was based on a popular quote 'one half does not know how the other half lives'. The Colonial Office felt it was unnecessary to be apologetic about the proposed series and sent their detractor a specimen of one of the pamphlets.<sup>80</sup>

In view of the success of the kind of material received from West Africa for this series the Colonial Office agreed that the MOI should approach Sir Geoffrey Northcote in Nairobi to produce an pamphlets which would represent East and Central Africa in a similar way. Titles suggested included, A Day in the Life of a Tanganyikan Village Headman, A Day in the Life of an 'Improved' Kikuyu Farmer, A Day in the Life of a Medical Officer in Nyasaland, A Day in the Life of a Minister of the Kabaka of Buganda, A Day in the Life of a Jeannes School-teacher in Kenya, A Day in the Life of a Game Warden and A Day in the Life of an Arab Mudir in Zanzibar.<sup>81</sup> The more controversial idea of A Day in the Life of a European Farmer in Kenya was rejected as it was decided to

<sup>77</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, minute by Keating, 5 June 1943.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Colonial Office to Nigeria and Gold Coast, 17 August 1943.

<sup>79</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Grantham (Lagos) to Colonial Office, 7 September 1943.

<sup>80</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, minute by Thomas, 8 November 1943.

<sup>81</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Harlow to Thomas, 23 December 1943.



concentrate on the African angle.<sup>82</sup>

Since the pamphlets were also intended for distribution to schoolmistresses and girl guides, the Colonial Office's East African Department felt that there should be a greater representation of women in the series. New titles suggested included A Day in the Life of a Nursing Sister, A Day in the Life of a Woman Education Officer and A Day in the Life of an African Maternity and Child Welfare Nurse.<sup>83</sup> The MOI sought to recycle some of the 'excellent articles' from the Department of Education in Uganda's publication, the Uganda Teachers' Journal in this series. For example an article by J.O.K. Inyolo a Sub-Inspector of Police and an article by S.G. Nsubugo on training of engineers.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to the series 'How the Other Half Lives...' the MOI produced two further series of pamphlets for the British audiences. 'Wars Not Yet Won' covered subjects like Tsetse fly control, anti-malarial work, illiteracy, war against magic and superstition - health services, a local hospital in operation - education, schools and colleges, anti-locust measures, the fight against isolation - roads, railways and transport generally - from head portage to aeroplane, fight against malnutrition - agricultural and veterinary work - anti-soil erosion measures, the war against bad housing. Another series, 'Pioneers Who Served', examined the lives of empire builders like Raffles and Livingstone.<sup>85</sup>

The first subject of the 'Pioneers Who Served Series' was Mary Kingsley (1862-1900), the British ethnologist who had made extensive expeditions in West Africa. An early propagator of the principle of 'indirect rule', Kingsley recognised 'the separate cultural worth and identity of

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<sup>82</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, minute by Scott, 3 January 1944.

<sup>83</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, draft of letter to Harlow, 10 January 1944.

<sup>84</sup> PRO, CO875/15/16, Harlow to Keating, 7 January 1944.

<sup>85</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, Huxley memorandum, 18 May 1943; INF1/356, Huxley's directive, 24 May 1943.

African societies and saw that the missionary ideas of Christian proselytisation and the Colonial Office policy of direct rule tended towards the destruction of African social and political institutions'.<sup>86</sup> The MOI pamphlet concentrated on the continuities in British colonial policy and how the roots of the new policy of 'partnership' could be traced back to Kingsley's thinking:

Above all, her understanding of the African mind caused her to be firm in the conviction that wise rule must be built up within a framework of African tribal laws and customs, and that it would be nothing short of national murder to attempt to impose on an ancient people an imitation European government. Lord Lugard, also working in West Africa, had come to the same conclusion, and it was through him that the principle of indirect rule was first applied.

Out of trusteeship has grown the conception of partnership between free and independent nations which is the goal of our colonial policy today. Had she visualised this consummation Mary Kingsley could indeed have been proud of the foundations which she herself had helped to build.<sup>87</sup>

In order to illustrate the series of leaflets depicting the various aspects of the 'partnership' theme, the Colonial Office updated its circular despatch of December 1939 which had asked all colonies to supply photographs to build up a pictorial record of the war. At the same time the colonial governments were asked to supply London with photographs specifically relevant to the new pamphlets being produced.<sup>88</sup>

#### Books

Both the MOI and the Colonial Office cooperated in a number of ways with publishing houses to produce books with a colonial theme. The MOI worked with Longmans and arranged for the publication of the books Britain and Her Dependencies by Lord Hailey and From British Empire to

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<sup>86</sup> Paul B. Rich, Race and Empire in British Politics, (Cambridge, 1990), p.31 and chapter 2, 'Mary Kingsley and the emergence of cultural relativism'.

<sup>87</sup> PRO, FO371/34095/A10885, Commonwealth Leaflets, Series A, 'Pioneers Who Served', no.1, Mary Kingsley.

<sup>88</sup> PRO, CO875/17/15, minute by Girkins, 3 July 1943 and circular despatch to all colonies, 15 December 1943.



Commonwealth by Sir Alfred Zimmern, the Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at Oxford and Deputy-Director of the Research Department at the Foreign Office. Hailey's book was also published in the United States. The MOI also arranged for Longmans to publish a series of books on the regions of the colonial empire including one on East Africa.<sup>89</sup> Collins published a book in their illustrated series on the British Colonial Empire.<sup>90</sup> Sabine cooperated with the publishing house Chatto and Windus to produce a series illustrated booklets for children.<sup>91</sup>

The MOI sponsored a visit by the author Philip Guedalla to East and West Africa who began a descriptive and historical book on the colonial empire on his return.<sup>92</sup> Guedalla was a writer and historian who was the Honorary Director of the Ibero-American Institute of Great Britain and head of the Latin American Section of the MOI. Hodder and Stoughton had asked the Colonial Office to take 5,000 copies of the book and that they would need five tons of paper above their quota. This proposal was 'warmly supported' as it was thought that there would be a market for it in the United States.<sup>93</sup>

In order to celebrate Uganda's jubilee year the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, suggested that an illustrated book by a scholarly author should be produced on the development of Uganda in the last fifty years under British administration. It would be distributed both in Britain and in the United States.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> ibid.

<sup>90</sup> PRO, CO875/17/15, minute by Sabine, 19 May 1943.

<sup>91</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, meeting of the publications sub-committee of the committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 13 January 1943.

<sup>92</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, meeting at the MOI, 16 December 1942. The MOI would help with paper allocation for this book.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, Committee on Colonial Publicity in the United Kingdom, 13 January 1943.

<sup>94</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, meeting of the committee on publicity in the United Kingdom, 7 April 1943.

Elsbeth Huxley initially agreed to write the book which would be titled Uganda's Jubilee but instead this was be partly covered by her in a more general book she was writing about East Africa.<sup>95</sup>

Professor W.K. Hancock's hugely successful Penguin Special Argument of Empire was shown unofficially to the Publications and Empire Divisions of the MOI but was not, at the author's request, submitted for policy approval.<sup>96</sup>

The Social Services Department of the Colonial Office cooperated with Chatham House in providing material for a survey on progress made in the social welfare area in the colonial empire. The Colonial Office had become involved because much of the original draft had been 'misleading or inaccurate'.<sup>97</sup> The project had been taken over at a later stage by the eminent anthropologist Dr. Lucy Mair\*, whose previous form included the research for the Land and Native Administration chapter of Lord Hailey's African Survey.<sup>98</sup>

Mair's book was intended to serve as a counterblast to Leonard Barnes's Soviet Light on the Colonies which was critical of British colonial policy and had received wide public attention.<sup>99</sup> Barnes was a former Colonial Office official who resigned and went to live in Africa in 1925, working as a writer and journalist for the Natal Witness, the Cape Times and the Johannesburg Star. Soviet Light on the Colonies compared British colonial methods in tropical Africa and Soviet policies and practice in former Tsarist colonies of Central Asia. The book described a fictitious journey through British Africa undertaken by 'John' (the author) accompanied by a Soviet citizen, Vova Korolenko. The style of the book was informal and chatty. The

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<sup>95</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, note by Sabine, August 1943; CO875/14/13, meeting between MOI, Colonial Office and the BBC, 20 August 1943.

<sup>96</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, MOI Progress Report for 1943, 30 December 1943.

<sup>97</sup> PRO, CO875/16/3, minute by Orde Brown, 21 May 1943.

<sup>98</sup> Cell, op.cit., p.229.

<sup>99</sup> PRO, CO875/16/3, Blaxter to Lloyd, 21 March 1944.



intricacies of British colonial policy, of concepts like Indirect Rule, Trusteeship and Native Authorities were all presented in an accessible manner. Criticisms of British policy voiced by Vova in dialogue with British people he met on his journey. Vova's boasts about Soviet achievements of regional autonomy for the constituents of the Soviet federation, of workers' democracy and the development of Trade Unions in Soviet Central Asia appear a little ridiculous to audiences of the 1990s, but the critique of British policy would surely have struck a chord with contemporary audiences who were trying to make sense of the British empire in the aftermath of Singapore. In summing up his journey to the author, Vova lamented the general lack of British recognition that change was necessary:

'But, honestly, John, I am discouraged by what I have seen - apprehensive even. In a way, there is so much good will, so much unselfish endeavour. And yet, and yet ... What comes of it? Mostly it goes to waste because of your blank incomprehension of the issue.'

'Mine?'

'You know what I mean. The white people who rule Africa. Why, not one man jack among them in the whole continent, or in your Colonial Office either, sees that the colonial problem is simply an aspect of the problem of the defence of democracy - or rather how to mount democracy's counter-offensive against fascism. Colonial freedom is the second front which the democratic principle will have to open throughout the world, if it is to save itself. Democracy will outlive the totalitarian challenge only if it can itself offer prompt, radical and constructive innovations. I see no sign that those who hold the reins in British Africa are either prepared for anything of the kind, or in command of means to execute it if they were ...'<sup>100</sup>

The result of Mair's endeavours was hardly a match for Barnes's book. Although wider in scope as it covered social welfare developments in all of Britain's colonial dependencies it was dull and uninspired and written in a matter-of-fact style and without comment. Just one example will suffice:

Social Welfare Officers have already been appointed for Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and an appointment has been sanctioned for Sierra Leone. Plans have been

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<sup>100</sup> Barnes, op.cit., p.225.

made for the appointment of one woman Welfare Officer in the latter colony and two for the Gambia. The Nairobi Municipal Council, which has taken the lead in Kenya in the study of urban problems, in 1943 proposed the appointment of a woman Social Welfare Worker for work in the African locations.<sup>101</sup>

In general the Colonial Office was delighted with the progress made by the Empire Division of the MOI under the direction of Gervas Huxley. Sabine acknowledged Huxley's skill in managing to achieve the cooperation among the various departments in the MOI, Empire, Home, Photographs, Films and Production Divisions working together 'on the projection of a single subject'. Indeed, Sabine felt that Huxley had succeeded in 'transforming the Ministry [of Information] almost out of recognition'. Sabine, however, also recognised that the propaganda effort in Britain would have to be of a long-term nature. there was no room for complacency as what had been produced to date was providing basic material, the propagandists were not 'in any sense engaged in a nation-wide campaign'.<sup>102</sup>

Nonetheless, problems still arose between the MOI and the Colonial Office. Some in the Colonial Office continued to feel antipathy towards the propagandists in the MOI who, they believed, did not have the expert knowledge required to be effective colonial propagandists. Although advances had been made, it was thought that at times the material produced by the Empire Information Service lacked 'much tangible appeal to the "common man"'.<sup>103</sup>

At the end of 1943 MOI-Colonial Office cooperation in producing a pamphlet This Partnership resulted in the abandonment of the project. The aim had been to 'illustrate the material and moral strength of the British Commonwealth' and the 'partnership' which existed within the Commonwealth in fighting the war.<sup>104</sup> While Colonial Office officials agreed that the pamphlet conveyed a sense

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<sup>101</sup> L.P. Mair, Welfare in the British Colonies (London, 1944), p.112.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, minute by Sabine, 19 May 1943.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, minute by Keating, 23 December 1943.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, CO875/16/2, Usill to Morgan, 22 November 1943.



of the empire's cooperative effort, it was considered 'dull' and the result of 'uninspired hack work'.<sup>105</sup> Details were found to be inaccurate and even insensitive. For example, reference was made to the vast production of food in East Africa when there was a famine in Tanganyika that year. The selection of photographs was considered poor and the Colonial Office questioned why the MOI had not approached the PIO in Nairobi for more suitable material.<sup>106</sup> The MOI decided to abandon the project. They complained to the Colonial Office that the territorial Information Officers in the colonies were too quick to condemn general material which sought to present a picture of the partnership 'within a bigger unit of the British Commonwealth' for failing to provide 'an exhaustive survey' of their own particular territory.<sup>107</sup>

A new initiative was also undertaken to increase press coverage of colonial issues, both in the national papers and in the provincial press. This activity was wide ranging. The Times promised to publish summaries of all the speeches given by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley.<sup>108</sup> The Colonial Office received a request from T.L. Blau of the Pictorial Press and Feature Press and News Service to photograph 'Behind the Scenes at the Colonial Office'. Although some of the typical Colonial Office reluctance to be involved in any kind of 'public relations' exercise resurfaced, it was decided that Colonial Office officials should 'accommodate ourselves to the manners of the times' not least because the Pictorial Press was a branch of the Hollywood Photography Ltd. and there were prospects that the photographs could be used in

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<sup>105</sup> PRO, CO875/16/2, Morgan to Sabben-Clare, 26 November 1943.

<sup>106</sup> PRO, CO875/16/2, minute by Footman, 16 December 1943.

<sup>107</sup> PRO, CO875/16/2, Usill to Morgan, 13 January 1944.

<sup>108</sup> PRO, CO875/16/16, Pitt Robbins, the News Editor of The Times, to Sabine, 8 March 1943. The Times was unable to publish the full texts of Stanley's speeches because in view of the paper shortage they would take up too much room.

North America.<sup>109</sup> The Secretary of State allowed himself to be photographed and Sir Charles Jeffries wrote an accompanying article of a tour around the Colonial Office in Downing Street.<sup>110</sup>

The MOI received sets of photographs from East Africa of wide ranging subjects such as, the control of locusts, malaria and rinderpest; hospital and nursery services; progress in agriculture and industry, sisal and coffee growing and breweries; and East African troops in the war in Burma. Between November 1944 and February 1945 the Photographic loans Library loaned out nearly 15,000 photographs.<sup>111</sup>

The Colonial Office circulated a specially prepared colonial bulletin of short news items from all the colonies to news agencies, the national press and 800 provincial papers which had a 'fair success'. Many regular visits had been made to certain editors of provincial papers. Sabine thought that on the whole relations with the press and the Press Section in the Colonial Office were close and that the Press Section had a good name for being efficient and helpful.<sup>112</sup> The fall of Malaya had awakened press interest in the colonies and in general three times more space was devoted to Press Section handouts than during the early stages of the war.<sup>113</sup> In February 1943 regional Press Conferences were arranged to stress the partnership theme which would also be mentioned at the monthly MOI

<sup>109</sup> PRO, CO875/17/14, Blau to Collins, 1 January 1942; minute by Jeffries, 6 January 1942; minute by Collins, 2 January 1942.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, CO875/17/14, minute by Thornley, 16 January 1942; Jeffries, 'The Colonial Office', undated.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, Empire Information Service progressed Report, 1 November 1944 - 28 February 1945.

<sup>112</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, minute by Sabine, 19 May 1943; minute by Sabine undated.

<sup>113</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, minute by Sabine, undated. Column inch figures for March to June 1943 were as follows:

	Inches		Inches
March, 1943	254	May, 1943	243
April, 1943	90	June, 1943	121



Ministerial meeting with the provincial press.<sup>114</sup>

Major problems confronting the Colonial Office in attempting to achieve a wider representation of the colonies in the British press remained competition with 'war news' and paper rationing. Sabine met a very cool reception from the Treasury when he attempted to increase the distribution of the periodical the Crown Colonist. Sabine considered that the Crown Colonist provided 'an interesting and attractive account of current colonial affairs' which he sought to distribute more widely to libraries, training colleges and the provincial press. Eventually permission was granted to print an extra 2,000 copies a month.<sup>115</sup>

William Simnett the editor of the Crown Colonist and the Colonial Office's representative at the New York World's Fair in 1940, wrote a book published in 1942, The British Colonial Empire. Simnett's book was supported by the Colonial Office and bought for distribution in Britain and the United States and to schools in particular. Although certainly 'not a thriller', the book was criticised for being 'rather pedestrian'. But it was recognised that there was a 'crying need for a text book of this kind'. Therefore the Colonial Office sent a circular despatch to Colonial posts drawing attention to its publication.<sup>116</sup> The book explained in simple terms the evolution of the British colonial empire, the principle of trusteeship which underlined British colonial policy and the commitment to 'hand over' the possessions to their former owners once they had achieved the 'fullest measure of political, social and economic development of which they may prove capable' within the framework of the British

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<sup>114</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, Committee on Colonial Publicity in the United Kingdom, 12 February 1943.

<sup>115</sup> PRO, CO875/16/9, Sabine to Gent, 23 March 1943; minute by Gent, 24 March 1943. See further CO323/1839/5/file.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, CO875/15/11, minute by Furse, 10 April 1942; Jeffries to Wood, Board of Education, 26 February 1942; minute by Sabine 3 January 1942; Cox to Education Officers in all Colonies, 21 October 1942.

Commonwealth.<sup>117</sup> A chapter was devoted to each region of the empire, gave a brief outline of their history, a description of the colonies and details of constitutional advances already made. The book recognised the great cooperation between the Europeans and Africans during the war. It was non-controversial in its description of the future of East and Central Africa and promoted partnership between the races. While the prospects for inter-territorial cooperation already existed in East Africa in the form of the East Africa Governors' Conference, Simnett ruled out the emergence of a 'White Dominion' of East Africa. Instead the future lay in the 'fruitful cooperation between European and African'.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, in describing the future political developments in Central Africa, Simnett discounted the possibility of amalgamation until the 'obnoxious "pass laws"' of Southern Rhodesia had been repealed and a 'practicable way' was found to encourage the 'cooperation between the two races'.<sup>119</sup> The book concluded with a chapter devoted to the future of the British Commonwealth. The constituents of the British colonial empire were at present in the position of 'junior partners' within the larger and evolving organisation of the British Commonwealth. The British colonial record, he asserted, was the most progressive among the colonial empires in the world. Simnett portrayed the British commitment to colonial self-government as a commitment to the 'eventual independence' of the colonies because self-government 'naturally implies that they will be free like the Dominions to choose whether they wish to remain associated with the Commonwealth or not'.<sup>120</sup>

While Simnett favoured the internationalisation of the

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<sup>117</sup> W.E. Simnett, The British Colonial Empire, (London, 1942), p.22-3.

<sup>118</sup> ibid., p.90.

<sup>119</sup> ibid., p.98.

<sup>120</sup> ibid., p.221.



responsibility for the colonies and regional cooperation in the post war period, he was careful to maintain that the ultimate administrative responsibility for the British colonial empire remained British. He looked forward to the challenge of the future with a final uplifting message for the British and colonial peoples alike which the Colonial Office would find little to disagree with:

here is work waiting, in all branches of the Colonial Service and in many unofficial capacities, for the best of Britain's sons (and daughters), and here too is a high and inescapable responsibility for the British peoples as a whole, no matter in what measure they may share it with others, and best of all with the Colonial peoples themselves. The Colonial Empire will pass: the Colonies will become nations. Britain has willed it so, has willed the end and the means, but here and now, and in the testing years to come, there is a great and worth-while task to be accomplished for humanity.<sup>121</sup>

Although the reader had been told of the ways and means of the transformation of the British colonial empire into the British Commonwealth of free nations, the discerning reader would be forgiven for asking the question 'when'?

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, received a request from the editor of the East African Standard, Ferdinand Joelson, to send a message of congratulation for publication in the 1000th edition of the newspaper.<sup>122</sup> Doubts were expressed about the request on the grounds that the paper represented 'white settler' opinion. The paper's attitude to East African affairs was also 'by no means acceptable in all quarters here'. The Colonial Office also wanted to avoid setting a precedent for similar requests in the future.<sup>123</sup> Notwithstanding these objections Stanley sent a message which clearly indicated the part he expected the East African Standard to play in the future. Stanley said he valued the work of 'periodicals such as East Africa and Rhodesia in strengthening the bonds of understanding and interest between the

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<sup>121</sup> ibid., pp. 224 and 228.

<sup>122</sup> PRO, CO875/18/4, Joelson to Stanley, 18 August 1943.

<sup>123</sup> PRO, CO875/18/4, minute by Dawe, 6 September 1943; minute by Gater, 7 September 1943.

people of this country and those of the colonies overseas'. In particularly diplomatic terms he recognised how for nearly 20 years the East African Standard had been noted for 'its independent and forceful presentation of views upon East African topics' and hoped that in the future the paper would contribute to the solution of colonial problems by providing a 'week by week a continuous picture of East African life'.<sup>124</sup>

The Colonial Office was not pleased with articles which had appeared in a sister paper of the East African Standard, the Mombasa Times about the decline of morality in wartime Britain.<sup>125</sup> Sir Gilbert Rennie, the Chief Secretary to the Kenyan government spoke to Anderson, the Managing Director of the East African Standard group which owned the Mombasa Times, to ensure that similar articles would not appear in future. The Mombasa Times, however, sinned again by publishing a report which stated that British 'morals had sagged'. The report claimed that there had been an 'increase in venereal disease' and that women's organisations had complained to the Government that because of 'official failure to use the women concerned in war work, prostitution is virtually classed as an essential occupation'. Northcote, the PIO in East Africa wrote to Kinnear complaining about the 'morbid pessimism' of the East African Standard group's London correspondent. The Colonial Office thought these kind of articles would have a bad effect on the morale of British troops serving in East Africa, but Kinnear was adamant that this was an issue for MOI censors and not the responsibility of his papers. The Colonial Office, reluctant to take the matter up with Watney, the London correspondent of the Mombasa Times, preferring to keep an eye on developments and recommended that Rennie should approach Anderson if it was deemed

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<sup>124</sup> PRO, C0875/18/4, Thornley to Joelson, 7 September 1943.

<sup>125</sup> PRO, C0875/6/17, minute by Morgan, 18 March 1942.



necessary in the future.<sup>126</sup>

#### New Initiatives at the BBC

One of Gervas Huxley's aims when he became Director of the Empire Division was to improve the relationship between the BBC and the Colonial Office. To this end new avenues of cooperation were explored which aimed to increase the colonial content of BBC broadcasts and also to project the partnership theme in order 'to stimulate the provision, in the most useful form, of information and publicity material necessary to the effective coverage by the BBC of the affairs of the Colonial Empire and the work of the Colonial Office'. To this end the BBC agreed to the appointment of a Colonial Office Liaison Officer.<sup>127</sup> The BBC suggested the appointment of Gervas Huxley's wife, Elspeth who was already working in the BBC's press department. The Colonial Office thought that the proposal was an 'admirable idea'<sup>128</sup> but ensured that all questions of policy remained under Colonial Office control.<sup>129</sup>

Under Elspeth Huxley's guidance a 'comprehensive scheme of broadcast talks, discussions and features on Empire subjects' was planned.<sup>130</sup> In January 1943, at the suggestion of the director of talks at the BBC a listener research report was prepared to enable the BBC to understand the state of British public opinion in order to plan a series on the empire. The resulting report represents an interesting insight into the state of British

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<sup>126</sup> PRO, CO875/6/17, Mombasa Times, 17 August 1943; Northcote to Wathen 17 August 1943; minute by Morgan, 17 September 1943; Thomas to Usill, 6 October 1943; Seel to Rennie, 6 November 1943. Morgan was able to note that 'harmful' articles had ceased to appear, minute by Morgan, 25 November 1943.

<sup>127</sup> PRO, CO875/19/16, meeting between the Secretary of State, Oliver Stanley and Rendall and foot of the BBC, 17 February 1943.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, CO875/19/16, minute by Stanley, 12 April 1943.

<sup>129</sup> PRO, CO875/19/16, Elspeth Huxley took up her appointment in May 1943.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, CO875/14/11, memorandum by Huxley, 18 May 1943.

public opinion, albeit a limited sample of that opinion, on the British empire and gives an idea of the 'publicity problem' confronting the propagandists in educating the British public about the colonial empire.

The BBC used two sets of local correspondents who were asked the same questions. A group of 895 local correspondents were asked to summarise the reactions of people with whom the correspondents were in daily contact. The second group of 286 were asked to give their personal opinions to the same questions asked of the group of 895. In both cases the correspondents were told that the BBC was planning a series of talks on the British Empire so that the correspondents would understand the motivations behind the questions.<sup>131</sup>

It was found that there was the most elementary confusion about the nature of the British empire. Indeed, even the term the 'colonies' was generally used to denote any part of the empire outside the United Kingdom. Few recognised that there was a difference between the term 'colony' and 'dominion'. Of the 895 correspondents only 29% of their contacts realised that the term the 'colonies' did not include the dominions. Moreover, the 895 correspondents were asked whether in ordinary conversation they generally found people using the terms correctly, 18% said yes, but 82% said no.<sup>132</sup>

Of the group of 895 correspondents 65% stated that their correspondents had firm opinions on 'how' the colonial empire was acquired. In many cases more than one factor was mentioned:

Method	% of correspondents most subscribed to this
'By conquest from native peoples'	90
'By peaceful colonisation'	60
'By conquest from other Colonies'	46

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<sup>131</sup> PRO, FO371/34088/A2750, The BBC Listener Research Report, the British Empire, 'Some aspects of public opinion on the British Empire, and in particular, the Colonial Empire', January 1943, the Listener Research Department of the BBC, 22 February 1943, p.1.

<sup>132</sup> ibid., p.1.



'By Mandate from the League of Nations'	39
'By purchase or negotiation'	31
'By dynastic marriage'	3

The group of 286 correspondents were asked to give their personal opinion on 'how' and 'why' the colonial empire came into existence. The report showed that the responses to the question 'how' the empire came into being paralleled those given by the 895. The views of the 286 on 'why' the empire came into being were more diverse, but the most frequent response was the 'need for markets and raw materials'. The report showed that 'nearly as many took the view that the Colonial Empire had been acquired because British mariners had a spirit of adventure'. The compiler of the report also seemed to be shocked that a 'surprisingly large group thought that the primary cause of the Colonial Empire's existence was the need for "lebensraum" while only one correspondent mentioned that the empire came into existence because 'it was the will of God that it should do so'.<sup>133</sup>

The correspondents were then asked whether they considered the colonial empire to be an economic asset or a liability. The two groups gave similar responses; 86% of the 895 replied that most of their contacts regarded it as an economic asset. Comments made to elaborate this point of view included 'the Empire is regarded as an invaluable market and source of raw material, without which Great Britain could not subsist' and that this had become 'acutely realised in wartime'. Small minorities voiced reservations, for example that the colonial empire was an economic asset only to the rentier and not to the nation as a whole. The minority who believed that the empire was an economic liability did so because they thought 'more was spent on development and protection than was seen in returns, and that Imperial preference led to an increased cost of living for the people of Great Britain.'<sup>134</sup>

The two groups were asked about attitudes towards the present state of social and economic development in the

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<sup>133</sup> ibid., p.2.

<sup>134</sup> ibid., pp.2-3.

colonial empire. The results were as follows:

Replies of the	Present stage regarded as-			
	Eminently Satisfactory	Quite	Barely	Thoroughly Unsatisfactory
895	3%	33%	56%	8%
286	5%	27%	59%	9%

Looking at the report one could take some comfort in the observation that 'both extreme views receive comparatively little support' but one also could not overlook that over half replied that the present state of development was considered to be 'barely satisfactory'. The report noted that supplementary comments indicated that this was a result of the 'shock' at the loss of Malaya. Others felt that the 'interests of those engaged in exploitation of the resources of the Colonies had been put first to the consequent neglect of native welfare'.<sup>135</sup>

The 895 were asked about their personal responsibilities towards colonial peoples: 'Do most of your contacts think that if a Colony is not self-supporting it is right that it should be subsidised by the British tax-payer?'. Of this group 37% reported that their contacts had no opinion, and 40% thought that the British tax-payer should 'pay up', while 23% took the opposite view. The same question was asked of the group of 286 with the result that a ratio of five to one favoured placing the burden on the British tax-payer. Supplementary comments revealed, however, that subsidies should only be given 'with the object of achieving subsequent self-support' and when 'an eventual economic, or present strategic advantage was apparent'.<sup>136</sup>

The correspondents were then asked about attitudes to Britain's past colonial record. They were asked to name the most common view applying to each group. The results

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<sup>135</sup> ibid., p.3.

<sup>136</sup> ibid.



were as follows:

Statement	895	286
	%	%
'We have every right to be proud and no need to feel at all ashamed, of our Colonial record'	15	13
'Our Colonial record is mixed, but the good exceeds the bad'	72	77
'Our Colonial record is mixed, but the bad exceeds the good'	10	7
'We ought to be ashamed of our Colonial record and have no right at all to feel proud of it'	3	

The report noted that in answering this question many people were making 'a comparative assessment of the British Colonial record against that of other powers'. A further factor influencing the responses was the feeling 'autre temps, autre moeurs' (other times, other manners). The report could offer the Colonial Office some comfort in the result that the majority of the responses thought that the British colonial record was mixed, with the good exceeding the bad and that the misgivings about British colonial policy had not received a wholesale condemnation.<sup>137</sup>

The 895 were asked to estimate what proportion of their contacts had any views about what the future of Britain's colonial policy should be:

Some views are held by -			
- All	- Most	- A Minority	- None
3%	34%	52%	11%

The report also produced a digest of the views held on the future of British colonial policy based on the thinking of the 'thoughtful minority'. The responses of the 286 individual correspondents were as follows:

The ultimate aim should be the admission of all Colonial territories into equal partnership with Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions, and that all Colonial policy should be directed towards that aim. As an immediate task, there should be an overhaul of the social, economic and educational systems of each

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<sup>137</sup> ibid., p.4.

Colony, so that all exploitation of native labour should cease and all vested interests be made to take second place whenever necessary. The first duty of the British Government should be the encouragement and education of native peoples in the art of self-government.

The report remarked upon the absence of 'certain views' about the future of Britain's colonial policy. Although few said 'we ought to carry on as we have done in the past' or 'leave the Colonies to shift for themselves'(sic), it is interesting to note that the favoured Colonial Office policy of 'partnership' was mentioned in this digest.<sup>138</sup>

Finally, it was noted, there was 'considerable interest' in the projected series of talks on the empire. From the responses the following scheme was drawn up:

I Historical

- (1) How and why the Empire was acquired
- (2) The present constitutional structure of the Empire, Colonial administration, and the differences between Colonies and Dominions
- (3) The mutual inter-dependence of the Empire; the advantages to Great Britain of the Empire, and the advantages of membership to it
- (4) Economic and political future; the conditions necessary for self-government

II Descriptive

- (1) The social and economic conditions of Colonial territories before colonisation
- (2) The ordinary lives of the ordinary citizens of the Empire
- (3) Geography, climate and natural resources

Above all it was thought that the talks should 'frankly present the Colonial point of view, preferably through Colonial speakers' and that the talks should be objective:

there should be no attempt to gloss over past mistakes in Colonial policy, or view the problem through rose-coloured spectacles. It was felt that unless this was watched with the greatest care, the talks would be regarded as 'mere propaganda', and, far from doing good, would do positive harm.

The BBC arranged for special empire talks in their schools programme which would complement efforts already made to interest the youth of Britain in the colonial empire.<sup>139</sup> There was already a discernable increase in the

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<sup>138</sup> ibid.

<sup>139</sup> PRO, C0875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 12 February 1943.



number of colonial broadcasts on the Home Service by June 1943.<sup>140</sup> The BBC used the summaries of colonial news produced by the Colonial Office Press Section, 'Empire Round Up'.<sup>141</sup> The Colonial Office took steps to ensure that any officers on leave from the Colonial Service were passed on to the BBC.<sup>142</sup>

One of the series produced by the BBC on the Home Service about the empire was 'Red on the Map' discussions on the meaning and obligations of the empire. The first programme on 13 April was a round table discussion between the M.P. and Chairman of the FCB, Arthur Creech Jones, Prof. W.K. Hancock, author of Argument of Empire, Sir Harry Luke, the Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1938-42 and Chief Representative of the British Council in the Caribbean, 1943-6, Frederick Kuh, the London bureau chief of the Chicago Sun and Graham Spry, the Canadian journalist. The series ran until the beginning of 1944 and included contributions from speakers like Quintin Hogg, Alfred Zimmern, Professor of International Relations at Oxford, Dr. Margaret Read, head of the Colonial Department, the Institute of Education at the University of London, Sir Arku Korash the distinguished judge and the first Chief Justice in post-independent Ghana and Sir Bernard Bourdillon, a former Governor of Uganda and Nigeria. Subjects debated ranged from trade, the work of doctors in the empire, mass education and raising the standard of living in the colonies.<sup>143</sup>

On the Forces Programme the BBC ran a more informal

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<sup>140</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, note by Sabine, undated.  
The increase was as follows:

	June 1942	June 1943
Schools Talks	6	10
Home Talks	4	18
Features	3	6
Music	1	3

<sup>141</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 17 March 1943.

<sup>142</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 6 January 1943.

<sup>143</sup> Radio Times, 13 April 1943, 11 May 1943, 6 July 1943, 14 September 1943, 7 December 1943 and 4 January 1944.

series 'Brush Up Your Empire', between December 1943 and August 1944. This series covered specific areas of the empire including Australia, Canada, India, South Africa, West Africa, Malaya, West Indies, Burma, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, and East Africa. The format of the programme was 'readers questions' put to guest experts such as Korash and Trafford Smith a representative from the Colonial Office who had also served in Fiji, the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, by the presenter Lionel Gamlin.

The biggest expansion was in the area of schools programmes in line with the Colonial Office's desire to educate British youth about the responsibilities of empire and to emphasise the colonial 'partnership' theme.<sup>144</sup> The BBC made room for programmes about the empire in English, geography and history broadcasts. For example, a District Commissioner from Tanganyika Donald Malcolm gave a talk on rural problems. The series 'Travel Talks: Other People's Jobs' featured the Colonial Office anthropologist Audrey Richards\* on 'Copper for Pennies', the story of Africans working in Rhodesian copper mines, while in the same series T.D. Maitland on 'Soap for Washing' was the story of the extraction of vegetable oils from the palm groves of Nigeria. In an English broadcast Honor Wyatt's 'A Woman Explorer' examined what Mary Kingsley's writing revealed about her character as well as her adventures in West Africa. Mary Kingsley's travels in West Africa appeared again as a subject in the history series 'Stories from World History'. Other subjects in this history series included Rhoda Power, the director of schools broadcasts, 'Covered Wagons in South Africa', the story of the 'great trek': how Piet Retief lost his life at the hands of Dingaan the Zulu; Power's 'the Adventures of a Negro', the story of Granville Sharp's work for the freedom of the slaves and Power's 'the Dark Continent' the story of Stanley's meeting with Livingstone. A geography series 'New Developments in the British Empire', covered topics

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<sup>144</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 6 January 1943.



like 'Fruit Farmers in Cape Colony', 'Pioneer Farmers in Northern Rhodesia', 'African Farmers in Uganda', 'Settlers of the Kenya Highlands' and 'West Africa's part in the War'. Towards the end of the war the series 'the World Our Neighbour' told the story of Livingstone.<sup>145</sup>

Major preparations were undertaken to celebrate Empire Day in 1943. The BBC planned to demonstrate 'the Empire's war effort' and 'attachment of the Colonies to [the] British connection and [the] confidence in [the] progressive realisation of aspirations within the framework of the British Empire'.<sup>146</sup> Learie Constantine\*, the black welfare officer at the Ministry of Labour and renowned Jamaican cricketer, presented the 'Postscript' programme after the news on 23 May.<sup>147</sup> The Radio Times for the week 23-29 May was an Empire Day special issue. An article by Leslie Stokes paid tribute to the empire's contribution to the war effort and the common feeling of friendship and unity among the 'empire family'. The war, he wrote, provided an opportunity for the people of the empire to meet each other all over the world. At first glance there did not appear to be common ground between these diverse people: 'it takes something else to make the kind of friendship that endures and survives quarrels - something else to hold friends together in spite of fundamental differences of outlook, different habits, different religions'. It was something intangible that could not be put into words because 'it never occurs to them to talk about it' and 'something which they all share', the unspoken assumption about the unity and friendship of the British empire.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Radio Times, 18 June 1943, 29 October 1943, 19 November 1943, 2 November 1943, 6 December 1943, 15 November 1943, 22 November 1943, 29 November 1943, 20 January 1944, 10 February 1944, 24 February 1944, 2 March 1944, 30 March 1944, 1 May 1945.

<sup>146</sup> PRO, CO875/19/17, Grenfell Williams to Sabine, 21 April 1943.

<sup>147</sup> PRO, CO875/19/17, minute by Sabine, 19 April 1943.

<sup>148</sup> Radio Times, 23-29 May 1943.

On the 23 May there was a special edition of the 'Brains Trust' devoted entirely to questions about the empire, an 'Empire Brains Trust' featuring regular panelists Malcolm Sargent and Julian Huxley and special guests, Lord Hailey, Learie Constantine and Reginald Coupland the Beit Professor of Imperial History at Oxford and member of the Round Table.<sup>149</sup>

On Empire Day itself the BBC featured a special schools broadcast presented by Douglas Allan in which British schoolchildren met representatives of the Dominion and the colonies in Britain. This included a Maori, a West Indian, a South African, an Indian, an Australian who told the story of 'Waltzing Matilda', the drums of West Africa and a flying officer from Canada. 'Children's Hour' presented a special Empire Day concert. Between 8 p.m. and 8.15 p.m. 'The Empire Calls London' broadcast messages from parts of the empire including Newfoundland, the West Indies, West Africa, Uganda, Ceylon and New Zealand. From 8.15 p.m. until the news at 9 p.m. 'The Empire Meets' presented a musical programme of men and women from the Dominions and the colonies in London.<sup>150</sup>

Empire Day was celebrated on a reduced scale in 1944 and highlighted the united and undiminished effort in the final drive towards victory. Programmes included three concerts of empire music; a special 'Children's Hour' talk; 'The Empire Speaks' a programme in which the people of the empire who had served in the armed forces and specially recorded messages by the Dominion Prime Ministers were given the opportunity to speak; an Empire variety show 'The Empire Sings' and an Empire Day service from St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>151</sup> The youth of the empire were catered for with the celebrations of 'Empire Youth Sunday' on the 21 May 1944 with a talk by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster and a programme devoted to the children of the

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<sup>149</sup> ibid.

<sup>150</sup> ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Radio Times, 21-27 May 1944.



empire, 'Empire Youth Compares Notes'.<sup>152</sup>

The BBC continued to evoke the idea of empire unity within the British Commonwealth of nations, with its broadcasts for national occasions like Remembrance Sunday and Christmas broadcasts. For example the Christmas Day broadcasts in 1944 featured 'The Journey Home' which linked the peoples of the Commonwealth and the Allies by giving them the opportunity to greet their families throughout the world. The BBC devoted a week to programmes for victory in Europe and again on 13 May the BBC paid tribute to the contributions of the people of the empire and Commonwealth in 'A Victory Rhapsody' of songs and dances of the Commonwealth. The Empire Day broadcasts in 1945 provided a further opportunity to thank the people of the empire for their efforts. 'A Festival of Empire' with the music of the band of the Brigade of guards, a fanfare by the Royal Military School of Music and empire representatives of the armed forces.<sup>153</sup>

Empire Youth Sunday in 1945 looked to the future. The Radio Times included an article by Lord Elton on 'The Significance of Empire Youth Sunday'. He wrote, that after the struggle for survival in Europe, the 'heirs of a great inheritance', the children of the empire had the 'tremendous task of shaping the pattern of a new age'.<sup>154</sup>

In the morning a young ex-POW officer gave the address at the Empire Youth Sunday Service from Westminster and in the afternoon representatives from the Dominions and the colonies took part in an Empire Youth discussion.<sup>155</sup>

In spite of the growth in BBC broadcasts about the empire, problems still arose between the Colonial Office and BBC. Following the confusion surrounding a visit by the Queen to the Victoria League and the Colonial Office's failure to inform the BBC of this visit, the Colonial

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<sup>152</sup> ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Radio Times, 25 December 1944, 10-18 May 1945 and 24 May 1945.

<sup>154</sup> Radio Times, 10-16 June 1945.

<sup>155</sup> ibid.

Office agreed that in the future they would ensure that the BBC would be informed of any ceremonies for which the Colonial Office was responsible. The BBC along with the MOI would also be invited to the Under-Secretary of State of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Devonshire's 'tea parties' with visitors from the colonies.<sup>156</sup> Information Officers in the colonies would be reminded to send copies of any material to the BBC such as the recordings of an East African Masai ceremony which had been sent to India but not to London.<sup>157</sup>

Some in the Colonial Office continued to grumble about the BBC, reflecting how some were still uncomfortable with the idea of public relations. For example, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Under-Secretary of State complained about BBC announcements:

I am probably rushing in where Sabinic [after Noel Sabine the Public Relations Officer] angels fear to tread. But it does seem to me intolerable that the BBC, whatever other privileges it may aggregate to itself in its position of independent irresponsibility, should be allowed to garble official announcements.<sup>158</sup>

#### The 'Partnership' Exhibition

The Colonial Office and the MOI cooperated to mount a major travelling exhibition on colonial partnership to demonstrate 'why Great Britain has earned the devoted patriotism of her colonial people'. In particular, it dealt with improvements in health, agriculture, education and nutrition and stress the partnership theme by attempting 'to break down any conception of inferior racial characterisations'. Issues explored in projecting the partnership theme included: 'the fundamental similarities between the colonial people and ourselves', 'quotations from the Prime Minister, the Colonial Secretary, etc.', 'a new battle to be won - an opportunity for service by all

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<sup>156</sup> PRO, CO875/14/13, Meeting between the BBC and the Colonial Office, 26 November 1943.

<sup>157</sup> PRO, CO875/14/13, Meeting between the Colonial Office and the MOI, 17 December 1943.

<sup>158</sup> PRO, CO875/17/8, minute by Parkinson, 19 March 1943.



classes in the vast province of colonial development', 'scientific experiment to discover uses for "superseded" raw materials' and 'cooperation between British and foreign scientists in improving the conditions of colonial scientists'. Subjects considered too controversial were rejected, for example: 'the aspirations of colonial people', 'mistakes we have made, successes we have achieved', 'improvements envisaged', 'official denunciation of the colour bar' and 'resettling the returned native soldier'.<sup>159</sup> A room was to be made available at each site for the showing of films including a selection of films produced by the Colonial Film Unit and filmstrips about the colonies. One of the displays at the exhibition would be recent publications on colonial subjects including '50 Facts About the Colonies'.<sup>160</sup>

A voice of dissent was sounded in the Colonial Office who criticised the proposal for being overdramatic. As one official observed, 'it all seems frightfully martial, wars, fights, challenges etc....more health, more wealth, more education are what the colonies want'.<sup>161</sup> Despite these criticisms the exhibition was considered a great success 'in stimulating interest in the constructive work which is being done in the Colonies for social and economic welfare...[and] as a valuable local focal point for other educational activities about the Colonial Empire'. The exhibition was always opened in each of the cities by a well-known colonial figure, like Lord Hailey or Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the former Governor of Nigeria. During the exhibition's year-long tour of the country over 400,000 attended.<sup>162</sup> The Colonial Office was delighted with the

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<sup>159</sup> PRO, CO875/19/20, Shackleton to Keating, 1 June 1943.

<sup>160</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, Committee on Empire Publicity in the United Kingdom, 17 March 1943.

<sup>161</sup> PRO, CO 875/15/6, minute by Eastwood, 1 July 1943.

<sup>162</sup> PRO, INF1/112, Report on Publicity about the Empire, September to November 1943; July to October 1943. The attendance was as follows:  
Newcastle, October 1943, 21,751  
Southampton, November - December 1943, 28,543

exhibition as it provided 'an excellent focussing point for colonial publicity'. The exhibition was even mentioned on the 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. BBC Home Service news on 17 January 1944.<sup>163</sup> Following its nationwide tour the exhibition became an exhibit at the Imperial Institute in London until 1946.<sup>164</sup>

The Colonial Office also considered mounting an exhibition of a more cultural type. Audrey Richards, the distinguished anthropologist temporarily employed by the Colonial Office during the war, suggested an exhibition of primitive African art, crafts and music which would also contain films on native life, social service exhibits and the African in the modern world accompanied by pictures of Africans working in mines, munitions works, in hospitals and in the army. Such an exhibition was considered important to avoid the impression that everyone in Africa was 'a dancing cannibal'.<sup>165</sup> It was decided that a Gold Coast exhibition would be arranged under the auspices of the Royal Empire Society and funded by the MOI.<sup>166</sup>

#### Mass Education In African Society

The report on Mass Education in African Society drawn up by a sub-committee of the Colonial Office's Advisory

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London, December 1943 - January 1944, 72,000  
 Leeds, February 1944, 73,458  
 Manchester, March 1944, 28,900  
 Bristol, April 1944, 51,184  
 Bradford, April - May 1944, 14,213  
 Edinburgh, May - June 1944, 15,031  
 Glasgow, June - July 1944, 46,999  
 Liverpool, July - August 1944, 20,887  
 Sheffield, August - September 1944, 20,511  
 Swansea, September 1944, 13,939

<sup>163</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, Thomas to Huxley, 2 April 1944; Huxley to Lloyd, 21 March 1944.

<sup>164</sup> John M. MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire: the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960, (Manchester University Press, 1988), p.117.

<sup>165</sup> PRO, CO875/19/15, Richards to Furse, 18 September 1942.

<sup>166</sup> PRO, CO875/15/6, Committee on Empire Publicity in the United Kingdom, 17 March 1943.



Committee on Education in the Colonies was publicised in late 1943 and early 1944. It was exactly the kind of tangible progressive social policy that the colonial propagandists wished to publicise as an 'indication of future intentions'. However a careful balance had to be struck.<sup>167</sup> The Colonial Office wanted to avoid the impression that a big propaganda 'splash' might create of a 'new mass education drive in the colonies' under wartime conditions.<sup>168</sup> The general line should be 'not to "boost" the report' but to 'aim at securing the widest possible publicity in organs read by intelligent people'. False hopes should not be raised among people who were likely to be affected. Publication was deferred until the African governors had examined the report's recommendations.<sup>169</sup>

The Colonial Office thought that it would be difficult to 'control the manner in which the popular press might exploit this report'. It was therefore decided that a good summary would be provided to set 'the tone'. The Colonial Office helped the MOI to prepare a summary of the main points for distribution to the press.<sup>170</sup> Sabine undertook to contact the editor of The Times, Barrington-Ward, to offer a 'turn-over' article by Elspeth Huxley for publication. The BBC hoped to mention it on the Home News broadcast on the day of publication and to have a programme devoted to it in the 'Red On the Map' series. It was also proposed that a Parliamentary Question would be inspired on the subject to give the Secretary of State for the Colonies the opportunity to refer 'to the report' and say 'that copies were available in the Library of the House'.<sup>171</sup>

The foreword of the proof copy was considered good

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<sup>167</sup> PRO, CO875/14/13, meeting between the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the MOI and the BBC, 6 August 1943.

<sup>168</sup> PRO, CO875/14/13, meeting of 13 August 1943.

<sup>169</sup> PRO, CO875/14/13, meeting, 3 December 1943.

<sup>170</sup> PRO, CO875/15/9, meeting, 3 December 1943.

<sup>171</sup> PRO, CO875/15/9, The Report was debated by Margaret Read and Arku Korash in the BBC's series 'Red on the Map' on 14 December 1943; PRO, CO875/21/1, Huxley to Lloyd, 21 March 1944.

material for a broadcast. The foreword described the aim of extending education in Africa, in line with economic and social improvements before political developments:

Man may be healthy, though illiterate. He may be prosperous without being learned. He may, while still almost entirely ignorant of the wider duties of a citizen live and indeed enjoy life under a government which provides him with security and justice ...[but]... without such general share in education and such understanding, that democracy cannot function and the rising hope of self-government will inevitably suffer frustration.<sup>172</sup>

Three pieces were prepared for distribution to the press on 'Education in the Colonies'. 'Education and the Colonies: Policy and Administration' put the report in the context of the general development of thinking on colonial policy. It quoted Lord Hailey's speech to a colonial youth conference in Newcastle in October. Hailey put the Report into the context of developments at home and the wider aims of British colonial policy. 'In our domestic politics', he said, 'we recognise today that the improvement of the standards of living of the community cannot be left to individual effort or voluntary organisation it is one of the most essential functions of the state'. That principle had been projected from domestic into colonial policy. He quoted Stanley's speech in July 1943 in which Stanley identified educational advance and economic development as 'the twin pillars upon which any sound scheme of political responsibility must be based' for 'the success of self-government does not depend only on the capacity of the leaders to lead, but also on the ability of the community to respond'.<sup>173</sup>

The third piece provided a short summary of the report and argued that 'education must not consist merely in teaching children in school: it must look to the advancement of the whole community'. The summary of the Report sought to present the recommendations as a continuation of previous government policy and

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<sup>172</sup> PRO, C0875/15/9, proof copy of 'Mass Education in African Society'; minute by Lloyd, 24 September 1943.

<sup>173</sup> PRO, C0875/15/9, 'Education in the Colonies: Policy and Administration', 31 December 1943.



complementary to new ideas on development. For example, in 1935 the Colonial Office's Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies had stated that education should aim

to render the individual more effective in his or her condition of life ... and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of health, the training of the people the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of ideals of citizenship and service.

Two features of the report were highlighted. First, that the 'new impetus' provided by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act meant that the rate of progress on improvements in education would be 'hastened'. Second, new mass education techniques were summarised to achieve the aim of the spreading of literacy to all the community focusing on the needs of the people in farming and hygiene. Every available agency would be used to help promote mass education, from the expansion in the availability of cheap and suitable reading matter, encouragement of the arts, music, dancing and drama, to the possible use of broadcasting and the cinema.<sup>174</sup>

The Times welcomed the report in a leader on 13 January 1944 seeing it both as 'the' justification of Britain's colonial mission and also its aim: 'guiding the process by which latent capacities of the less advanced races are drawn out until they are ready to bear their own political and social responsibilities as members of the Commonwealth of equal nations in a world of free peoples'. This was particularly true of the people of Africa, who had 'the longest road to travel to the goal'.<sup>175</sup>

#### Victory in Africa

The MOI decided to tell the story of the campaigns on the African continent in a pictorial pamphlet, Victory in Africa. The pamphlet was written in 'simplified English' and designed for African schools. Unfortunately, there were only a limited number of photographs covering 'native

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<sup>174</sup> PRO, CO875/15/9, 'Education in the Colonies, Report on Mass Education in Africa: a Short Summary', 12 January 1944.

<sup>175</sup> The Times, 13 January 1944.

participation in the African campaign' which led the MOI to wonder if it was worthwhile to continue with the pamphlet. The Colonial Office wanted to proceed and noted that the text was 'excellent' and would lose some of its effectiveness if it were not illustrated. The only criticism the Colonial Office made about the pamphlet was that in the effort to pay tribute to the contribution of the African troops in the East African campaign, there was a danger that 'the part played by British troops may be diminished by lack of sufficient reference'.<sup>176</sup>

The resulting 47 page pamphlet told the story of the war in Africa from the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the routing of Italian and German forces in May 1943 to the King's visit to Tunis in June. Pictures included not only the major figures involved such as Emperor Haile Selassie, the King, Winston Churchill, Generals Alexander, Sir Alan Cunningham, Wavell, Montgomery and Auchinleck but also pictures of African troops, including an African despatch rider, Basutos of the Eighth Army holding a Catholic mass, the Royal West African Field Force in action and Llanyian Dagarti, the first Gold Coast soldier to receive the M.B.E. in the war.<sup>177</sup>

The text echoed previous tributes to the contributions of colonial troops and emphasised that their efforts were 'spontaneous'. Memories of the treatment of the Abyssinians by the Italians in 1935 were awakened when Italy declared war in June 1940 and led to 'thousands of Africans' asking to be 'trained to fight'. Following the 'great victory' in May 1943 there was 'rejoicing all over the world'. Again, the image of unity in the empire was evoked, embodied in the figure of the King. The King had travelled to Tunis 'to thank the soldiers for the people all over the Empire' a 'fitting' tribute following such a 'great victory'.<sup>178</sup> The initial print run at the end of

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<sup>176</sup> PRO, INF1/243, Grigsley to Usill, 9 September 1943; Morgan to Hunter, 4 October 1943.

<sup>177</sup> PRO, INF1/244, copy of Victory in Africa.

<sup>178</sup> ibid.



1944 was over ten thousand copies. The pamphlet was so successful that another nine thousand were ordered at the beginning of 1945.<sup>179</sup>

#### Sixty Million of Us

A major publication in 1943 was the illustrated pamphlet to embody the British-colonial partnership in fighting the war, Sixty Million of Us. It was intended to show the 'growing and united effort by the colonies towards winning the war' and 'the solidarity of Empire behind Britain'.<sup>180</sup> It was important because in showing the contribution of all the colonies to the war effort it would be educational about the empire in a more general way. Huxley thought that a 'good book on the colonial war effort' would compliment the major publicity drive for the 'partnership' theme as long as it was written from the 'right angle'.<sup>181</sup> The implication would be that the 'partnership' of sixty million of us to defeat the enemy would continue into peacetime.

It used the theme developed by the King in his Empire Day BBC broadcast of 1940 entitled 'sixty million of us'. It was also decided that it would not be distributed freely in the colonies, Britain and the United States because Colonial Office officials believed that a 'priced publication had more value than a free one'.<sup>182</sup>

Sixty Million of Us did not have an auspicious beginning. The 'dummy' produced in mid-1942 was criticised as 'wooden' and for being 'an aggregation of miscellaneous facts rather than a systematic if popular survey of the colonial war effort'. A text 'packed with strong meat' was

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<sup>179</sup> PRO, INF1/243, Biggs to Judd and Crossley, 22 March 1944; Biggs to Judd, Grigsley and Treneman, 13 March 1945.

<sup>180</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Ascroft, 6 May 1942.

<sup>181</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Huxley to Harlow, 16 March 1943.

<sup>182</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Sabine at a meeting with the Colonial Office, 1 May 1942.

sought.<sup>183</sup> Confusion was also evident in the MOI about the pamphlet's projected audience. The General Production Division of the MOI assumed that the primary audience was the colonies, as opposed to Britain, in order to 'keep them "sold" on the war and overcome the feeling they were out of it'.<sup>184</sup>

The pamphlet was divided into four sections, 'On Guard on Forty Fronts' would show the local defence and strategic position of the colonies; 'Food and Supplies are Vital to the War Effort' portraying the increases in colonial production for the war effort. 'On Active Service' showing the colonial military contributions. The last section, 'Gifts from Colonies to Britain's War Effort', highlighting the monetary contributions for things like aeroplanes and mobile canteens. The MOI was hampered in its efforts because of the limited availability of photographs from the colonies. The African war effort, however, was illustrated by photographs of scenes like the supply of the Middle Eastern war theatre, like a Nyasaland soldier from the King's African Rifles, women in munitions factories in the North Rhodesian copper mine district, a boy scout helping to collect war bonds in Kenya, a Ugandan transport steamer across lake Uganda helping in the distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables, Kenyan farmers increasing meat production for bully beef and bacon to feed the Allied armies, colonial nurses from Africa on service during the London blitz and the operation of mobile canteens in London supplied by Uganda, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. The products of East Africa were illustrated by a map, as was the defence of East Africa.

Yet to be decided were the questions of the target audience and whether the pamphlets should be distributed free. As Radcliffe noted, the Colonial Office wished to educate the British public as 'material interest in colonial matters' was 'very low' and that they regarded the pamphlet as 'the apple of their eyes. In other words

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<sup>183</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Grubb, 4 July 1942.

<sup>184</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Vaughan, 8 July 1942.



nothing better of the same sort will be coming along'.<sup>185</sup> The idea that some pamphlets would be sold created consternation in the MOI where it was thought that the whole project had been conceived with free distribution in mind. If it was to be sold, the emphasis would have to be altered and the 'propagandist approach' would have to be 'much less direct and obvious'. When considered against the background of competing propaganda themes and the tight reins the Treasury held over financing of free material, it became apparent that tension existed because this was just another project for the MOI whereas the Colonial Office considered the pamphlet to be a major publication. As Fraser, noted 'in my view, the relatively slight importance of the theme fails to justify the labour' of a kind of publication the Colonial Office envisioned would entail.<sup>186</sup> The MOI thought that the pamphlet could not be sold in its present form and if it needed a fresh approach it would find itself at 'the end of a long, long queue'.<sup>187</sup>

Radcliffe, the Director General of the MOI thought the General Production Division had underestimated the importance of telling the colonial story, not merely as an acknowledgement of the empire's contribution but as part of the long-term education of British public opinion:

People will have to stop being bored about the colonies if they want the rest of the world to acquiesce in our retaining them after the war. And HMG does want this. So we must do our best to interest people.<sup>188</sup>

The General Production Division remained sceptical. Although from the commercial angle there was 'nothing to "sell" in it', it was also recognised that 'there seems to be some sort of sale for anything these days!'.<sup>189</sup> The key therefore would be to make it saleable. Sabine wanted to obtain the services of a distinguished writer to write the

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<sup>185</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Radcliffe, 28 September 1942.

<sup>186</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Fraser, 8 October 1942.

<sup>187</sup> PRO, INF1/245, minute by Royds, 10 October 1942.

<sup>188</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Radcliffe to Royds, 14 October 1942.

<sup>189</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Royds to Fraser, 16 October 1942.

letterpress for the pamphlet. It was again stressed that the Colonial Office had to be very clear as to who their audience would be because the style would have to be simple for distribution in the colonies.<sup>190</sup>

The position was deadlocked. The Empire Division of the MOI wanted it to be freely distributed in the colonies and the Colonial Office seemed to be considering it from sale to the home audience and not for distribution abroad.<sup>191</sup> Usill of the Empire Division of the MOI suspected that the Colonial Office's real motives were very ambitious and wanted Sixty Million of Us to be as 'equally well received' booklets like Bomber Command.<sup>192</sup>

Although the MOI General Production Division continued to grumble about the Colonial Office's strictures, Usill pointed out that 'having gone as far as we have in getting them interested in propaganda, I think it would be unwise if we were to fight them any further on this matter'.<sup>193</sup>

A compromise was agreed whereby 20,000 copies of the pamphlet was prepared for free distribution abroad. For the home audience it was hoped that the publishing house, Hodder and Stoughton, would distribute the pamphlet in Britain at a price of one shilling.<sup>194</sup>

The Colonial Office had wanted the Daily Mail's features editor, Sidney Horniblow, to write the letterpress. Sabine argued that, 'if we are to present the colonies' war effort to this country, it must be done in an absolutely first class way'.<sup>195</sup> But Huxley pointed out that Colonial Office objections to the original dummy's style as being treated as popular journalism would not be

<sup>190</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Usill to Vaughan, 19 October 1942; Vaughan to Usill, 10 November 1942.

<sup>191</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Vaughan to Grigsbey, 15 December 1942.

<sup>192</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Usill to Vaughan, 16 January 1943.

<sup>193</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Usill to Vaughan, 19 January 1943.

<sup>194</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Production Directive for Sixty Million of Us, 23 February 1943.

<sup>195</sup> PRO, C0875/15/12, minute by Sabine, 16 April 1943.



remedied by Horniblow's treatment.<sup>196</sup> Huxley thought the MOI dummy was suitable for publication but the Colonial Office was not convinced. Ernest Sabben-Clare, the former Colonial Office-MOI Liaison Officer adopted a snobbish attitude towards the project and suggested scrapping the letterpress which meant the pamphlet would only have pictures. He argued that 'a good story' was being 'spoiled by being told with vulgar flourishes and exaggerations'. He illustrated his point with a textual example from the original letterpress:

Just as in this country, the Colonial Empire is geared for Total War ... The immediate and whole-hearted response of the Colonial Empire in September 1939 was a spontaneous demand to be allowed to take the fullest possible share of the hazards of war...

He hoped that 'if a really good pamphlet is to be produced ... it is not to be written by incompetent hacks at Malet Street'.<sup>197</sup>

Hilton Poynton head of the Defence Department agreed that it was 'semi-popular rubbish'.<sup>198</sup> Among the Colonial Office's Public Relations Department staff there was also a voice of realism. Some argued that a 'semi-popular' style was probably the best way of reaching a wide audience. Furthermore, its publication would serve a useful purpose in supporting the 'Colonial Partnership' exhibition which was due to open the following month in Newcastle. If British ignorance was to be overcome it was 'quantity rather than quality' which counted.<sup>199</sup> Thomas Lloyd, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State agreed, 'it is not a thoughtfully written, well-constructed document that is needed but one with popular appeal'.<sup>200</sup>

The pamphlet was changed, re-written and re-organised by Josephine Kamm of the Empire Information Service but

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<sup>196</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Grigsby to Vaughan, 9 April 1943.

<sup>197</sup> PRO, CO875/15/12, minute by Sabben-Clare, 12 August 1943.

<sup>198</sup> PRO, CO875/15/12, minute by Poynton, 13 August 1943.

<sup>199</sup> PRO, CO875/15/12, minute by Thomas, 13 August 1943.

<sup>200</sup> PRO, CO875/15/12, minute by Lloyd, 14 August 1943.

retained the original layout. The content was altered to take into account war developments and was designed to be more in line with the 'partnership' theme.<sup>201</sup> It began by reproducing the King's Empire Day broadcast of 1940. The first section became 'the Colonial Empire on Guard'. The 'vulgar flourishes' of the original text were toned down to read:

Just as in this country, the Colonial Empire is geared for total war. Although production is their chief weapon, the Colonies have sent many of their sons to fight overseas, and, like us, they have taken steps to defend themselves against possible attack ... The immediate wholehearted response of the Colonial Empire in September 1939 was a spontaneous demand to be allowed to take the fullest possible share of the hazards of war.

The pamphlet then paid tribute to the colonial efforts in self-defence, the establishment of colonial volunteer forces and civil defence schemes.<sup>202</sup> The contributions made to self-defence in the individual regions of the empire were recognised. For example, the civil defence organisation in East Africa, echoed the 'Dunkirk' spirit of the cooperative effort of every sea vessel, big and small with the Kenya Naval Navy Volunteer Reserve placed on a war footing and local shipping 'pressed into service for minesweeping and anti-submarine duties'. Schooners and dhows (among the oldest craft existing) 'helped to defend the port of Mombasa and played their similar part in the occupation of Italian Somaliland'.<sup>203</sup>

The pamphlet acknowledged the contribution made by the colonial medical and nursing services, not just in the immediate context of the war but also looked forward to a continuing contribution in the post war period: 'it is our policy to train Colonial peoples in sufficient numbers to run their own health and medical services. The experience they are gaining today will help lay the foundations of a

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<sup>201</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Kamm to Harlow, 17 June 1943.

<sup>202</sup> PRO, CO875/15/12, Sixty Million of Us, p.4.

<sup>203</sup> ibid., p.5.



healthy future'.<sup>204</sup>

This section was followed by pages of pictures. 'Ready to Defend Their Homeland' depicted a Nyasaland soldier of the King's African Rifles testing his "panga" which he uses for woodcutting and sometimes for defence' and a picture of KAR soldiers engaged in bayonet practice.<sup>205</sup> 'Women Play Their Part' showed a women in Northern Rhodesia working in a munitions factory making gun parts and shell and cartridge cases and a black African nurse who had come to work in a British hospital was shown with two white colleagues weighing a baby.<sup>206</sup>

The second major section, 'Food and Supplies Are Vital to the War Effort' described the 'vital part' the colonies played in providing raw materials and by comparing the efforts in the colonies to the 'Dig For Victory' campaigns at home. This section contained the rather optimistic declaration, that 'everywhere the Africans have responded eagerly to requests for help, requests which have been reinforced by vigorous articles in the African Press'. The production of food in East Africa for local consumption was described. Because of the wartime shortage of maize Africans had been encouraged to adopt a new diet with the inclusion of more meat and vegetables which would raise general standards of health and was 'another happy augury for the future'.<sup>207</sup>

Photographs chosen to illustrate this section included 'Crops Are Weapons of War' which showed a field of sisal in East Africa, and Nyasaland women pounding home grown grain.<sup>208</sup> 'Food for the Fighters' showed a creamery in Nairasha, Kenya, where butter was pressed and packed to be sent to troops in the Middle East and a Kenyan bully-beef factory which also sent tins of meat to the troops in the

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<sup>204</sup> ibid., p.6.

<sup>205</sup> ibid., p.9.

<sup>206</sup> ibid., pp.14-15.

<sup>207</sup> ibid., p.18.

<sup>208</sup> ibid., pp.20-1.

Middle East. A black Kenyan farmer was shown with one of his rams; the mutton was sent to the Middle East and the wool was used for army blankets.<sup>209</sup> 'Shipping is Vital to Victory' illustrated how colonial produce was transported with a picture of a Ugandan Lake Victoria steamer and ocean going dhow at anchor in the port of Mombasa.<sup>210</sup> 'Raw Materials Means More Munitions' was illustrated with a picture of a Northern Rhodesian mine producing copper which was used to make field telephone wires and cartridge cases.<sup>211</sup>

The third section 'the Colonies on Active Service' told the story of the colonial troops in the war and again emphasised the theme of 'spontaneous' contribution. As soon as the war broke out 'from every corner of the Colonial Empire came eager assurances of support'. There were many examples of the outstanding contributions of the colonial forces and their 'enthusiasm and efficiency and the gallantry of those who have served in the firing line have already made history'. This section continued with details of the East African campaign in general and of individual acts of heroism in particular.

For many months after Italy's entry into the war in 1940, the King's African Rifles, East Africa's white-officered regiment, which is composed of men from Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Nyasaland, bore the brunt of the fighting in the desert country of East Africa. With the Northern Rhodesian Regiment and the Somaliland Camel Corps, they put up a gallant and stubborn resistance against overwhelming pressure and carried out an orderly evacuation of British Somaliland. Later, when we passed over to the offensive and invaded Italian Somaliland, the first important objective to be captured - Afmadu - fell to the KAR and it was the speed of their advance to Afmadu which caused the Italians to evacuate Kismayu ... In February 1941, in the assault across the Juba river, the KAR made history. They hacked a road through dense, trackless bush which enabled our motorised columns to pass through and cut off the enemy's line of retreat 18 miles east of Gehib. In the same month a smaller, mobile force, including tanks and armored cars, captured Modun and took 1000

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<sup>209</sup> ibid., pp.22-23.

<sup>210</sup> ibid., pp.24-25.

<sup>211</sup> ibid., p.26.



prisoners ... Meanwhile other KAR companies had won victories at Todenyang and Namaraputu, while at Merca they released 179 British sailors, victims of a Nazi raider, who had been lodged in an Italian prisoner of war camp ... In Abyssinia, after a number of very successful rounding-up operations, the KAR were responsible for the brilliant capture of Mount Fike, which was instrumental in dealing a death blow to Italian hopes of a counter-attack. Further advances led in November to the assault on Gondar. East African troops and Ethiopian patrols had already captured Kulkaba on the road to Gondar, thus opening the way to the defences. In the final attack troops from all the East African dependencies took part.<sup>212</sup>

The Military medal was awarded to three KAR soldiers from Nyasaland, Sergeants Odilo and Walasai and Corporal Rabson. Sergeant Odilo's bravery was singled out for special mention who led his platoon after the commander was killed to go behind enemy lines and captured a machine-gun position.<sup>213</sup>

Pictures to illustrate this section included a soldier of the KAR and a picture of white Rhodesians with the caption '50% of the personnel of a Royal Air Force Bomber Command Squadron, which has made many raids on Germany, is composed of Northern Rhodesians'. There was an accompanying photograph of their homeland, the Victoria Falls in Rhodesia.<sup>214</sup> 'Skilled Workers in War Industries' showed a woman from Zanzibar, Spize Hooker, working in a munitions factory in Britain together with a picture of a Zanzibar town to illustrate where she had come from.<sup>215</sup>

In addition to the contribution to the empire's armed forces, the financial contributions made by the colonies was highlighted in the final section 'Gifts to Britain's War Effort'. Apart from the official contributions made by the colonial governments 23 million pounds had been subscribed by the people of the colonies and 8 million

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<sup>212</sup> ibid., p.30.

<sup>213</sup> ibid., p.31.

<sup>214</sup> ibid., pp.32-35.

<sup>215</sup> ibid., p.38.

pounds had been loaned.<sup>216</sup>

Colonial contributions greatly varied in size. They ranged from the government of Uganda's contribution to a fighter aircraft fund resulted in its name being given to a Hurricane squadron to the individual contribution by an old woman in Tanganyika. The experience of an individual was used to illustrate the larger theme:

Nowhere is there greater devotion to the Allied cause than in Germany's former colonies. In Tanganyika, which has been mandated to Britain only since the last war, an old woman walked into a mission dispensary carrying a tin of flour. 'Take this for aeroplanes', she said. 'I have got no money but have saved up all my food for today for you to give to help to buy an aeroplane. I would fast for a week to keep the Germans out of our country,' she added. 'I do not want my children and grandchildren to suffer under them as we did'.<sup>217</sup>

This section was illustrated with pictures of a mobile canteen donated by Zanzibar, providing refreshments to people clearing away air-raid debris in London, a picture of a mobile canteen donated by Uganda supplying drinks to the RAF and an army recreation hut also donated by Uganda.<sup>218</sup> The pamphlet ended with the tribute 'the peoples of the Colonial Empire are our friends. We salute them!'

Although the Colonial Office criticised small details, Sabine felt that the new version was 'a great improvement on the earlier drafts'.<sup>219</sup> Approximately 10,000 copies were distributed in the colonies.<sup>220</sup> 7,500 were put on

<sup>216</sup> ibid., p.40.

<sup>217</sup> ibid., p.41.

<sup>218</sup> ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>219</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Sabine to Huxley, 19 August 1943.

<sup>220</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Biggs to Judd and Crossley, 25 October 1943.

The following were ordered for East and Central Africa:

500 for Kenya  
 250 for Northern Rhodesia  
 100 for Nyasaland  
 200 for Tanganyika  
 150 for Uganda



sale to the public who attended the 'Colonial Partnership' exhibition but only half of these were sold.<sup>221</sup> This disappointing lack of sales was explained by the waning of public interest in the war effort. By mid-1944 people were more interested in 'the ebb and flow of current battles, and in the shape of things to come.'<sup>222</sup>

Reaction to the pamphlet from East Africa was generally good. The P.I.O. in East Africa, Sir Geoffrey Northcote, felt it was 'very well executed' but complained that some of the captions were incorrect. From Zanzibar one of the pictures of a Zanzibarian woman identified as 'Spize Hooker' had unfortunate repercussions. Her features and hairstyle were not found in Zanzibar and her name was unfamiliar. The feeling that the picture had been 'faked' called into question all British propaganda: 'if this picture is faked then other pictures are faked and if pictures why not news?'<sup>223</sup> The Colonial Office proved to be at a loss to explain the problem concerning Spize Hooker as she had told the photographer that she was from Zanzibar.<sup>224</sup>

#### Self-Government in the Colonies

Propaganda for the shape of things to come was embodied the MOI produced a pamphlet Self-Government in the Colonies, was designed mainly with an American audience in mind. A draft version contained the statement:

We are pledged to guide the Colonial peoples along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire. We are pledged to build up their social and economic institutions and we are pledged to develop their natural resources.

This statement caused concern in the Colonial Office and

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150 for Zanzibar  
500 for Sir Geoffrey Northcote P.I.O. East Africa

<sup>221</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Fraser to Royds, 30 June 1944.

<sup>222</sup> PRO, INF1/245, King to Keating, 10 July 1944.

<sup>223</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Northcote to Wathen, 8 August 1944.

<sup>224</sup> PRO, INF1/245, Wathen to Northcote, 20 September 1944.

showed the Colonial Office was still sensitive about making definite pledges about political developments in the colonial empire. As the Deputy Public Relations Officer, Ambler Thomas\* commented, 'it seems to me that sometimes that MOI propaganda assumes too glibly that self-government is the aim of British policy'. He recognised that this kind of thing was a 'bull point' in propaganda to the United States but it was usually accompanied with the qualification that an aim of British policy is 'progress on the road to self-government' conditioned by the laying of 'sound foundations'.<sup>225</sup>

Arthur Benson\* on temporary secondment from Northern Rhodesia and later governor of the dependency shared Thomas's 'unease' about the use of such a 'loose phrase' but pointed out that Stanley frequently used it. Therefore the Colonial Office could not backtrack since that might lead to demands for explicit definitions which 'with the best will in the world we could not give ... that is not the British method. Developments depend on future developments'. Benson also recognised that the aim of policy was to ensure that the colonial peoples were 'taking the maximum part possible ... in the management of their own internal affairs' and therefore 'self-government' was 'a proper description of our aim'.<sup>226</sup>

Josephine Kamm re-wrote the pamphlet outlining the specific constitutional progress made in each colonial territory. The offending statement on self-government was altered to meet Colonial Office objections:

'The striking feature of the British Empire is its diversity of peoples and conditions. We have been obliged to establish and operate a system of administration distinguished above all by variety, flexibility and elasticity'. These are the words of Lord Cranborne, as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1942. 'We have no cut and dried pattern', he added. 'We have adopted and adapted existing systems, changing them readily as the need arose and experience taught'.

Lord Cranborne's statement illustrates an essential characteristic of colonial policy, a policy

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<sup>225</sup> PRO, CO875/21/3, minute by Thomas, 17 February 1944.

<sup>226</sup> PRO, CO875/21/3, minute by Benson, 19 February 1944.



which even in the strain and anxiety of total war fosters and encourages political progress. It is a policy with one ultimate goal - self-government for the Colonial Empire within the framework of the Commonwealth. The steps by which this self-government can be achieved may (and do) differ from territory to territory and will not necessarily culminate in dominion status as we know it in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The aim is to educate people as rapidly as possible to assume the greatest measure of responsibility in their own government along the lines best suited to their own capacity.<sup>227</sup>

Kamm supported her argument with examples of the political advances made in the colonies. In Nyasaland, for example, Kamm described the decision taken in July 1944 to establish two advisory African Provincial Councils as an, 'important link between the government and the people ... consultation between the government and the people through their recognised leaders will thereby be facilitated and the development of political responsibility among Africans will be advanced'.

Sabine was delighted with the improvements and noted the importance of reinforcing 'the many statements which have been made about self-government by some solid facts about what has been achieved in recent years. The account is a good one'. The United States was sent 10,000 copies of the pamphlet and 10-20,000 were used in Britain.<sup>228</sup>

#### The Re-opening of the Race Question

Although the Colonial Office and the MOI managed to launch their publicity campaign for greater awareness in Britain about the colonial empire and the promotion of the new policy of 'partnership', the question of race relations threatened this new image of empire relations. This left the Colonial Office vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy. After the American entrance into the war, the background against which race questions were discussed changed. This hampered Colonial Office initiatives to produce a declaration of policy on the subject. Americans were

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<sup>227</sup> PRO, C0875/21/3, copy of Progress Towards Self-Government in the British Colonial Empire, by Josephine Kamm.

<sup>228</sup> PRO, C0875/21/3, Sabine to Lloyd, 4 November 1944.

imported into Britain as part of the build up for D-Day and with them they imported their Jim Crow policies of racial segregation in an army where black Americans were 'equal but separate'.<sup>229</sup> By the time D-Day arrived there were 130,000 black GIs in Britain.<sup>230</sup>

Britain was anxious that American racial practices would not spread to the British Army. Lord Cranborne noted this had implications for the Colonial Office's plans to issue a statement on the colour bar in the colonies. A public declaration against the colour bar would be interpreted by white American troops as 'a direct rebuke' and would exacerbate 'an already difficult situation'.<sup>231</sup>

The first reaction of the British authorities was to try and avoid an awkward situation in the first place and the government tried to exclude black GIs from coming to Britain at all. When this failed it was clear that whatever the Colonial Office may have argued, the government 'was certainly not prepared to risk the wrath of its vital ally by coming out against jim crow'.<sup>232</sup>

Regional Commissioners for Civil Defence drew the War Office's attention to the brawling between black and white GIs when they met in social situations in pubs, cinemas and at dances. There was also concern at the relationships formed between black GIs and white British women. Seven months after the first black GIs had arrived in Britain the War Office decided that while the segregation in the American army was a matter of their own concern, British officers would lecture their troops on the need to minimise contact with black Americans. Even more controversially General Arthur Dowler, commander of the Southern Region of England distributed 'Notes on Relations with Coloured Troops' to his district commanders. The notes while urging

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<sup>229</sup> For the impact of the arrival of black American troops in Britain c.f. Graham Smith, When Jim Crow met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain (London, 1987) and Reynolds, op.cit., chapters 14 and 18.

<sup>230</sup> Reynolds, op.cit., p.303.

<sup>231</sup> PRO, CO859/80/13, minute by Cranborne, 27 August 1942.

<sup>232</sup> Smith, op.cit., p.36.



British troops to be sympathetic towards black GIs also stated black people had a 'simple mental outlook'. British troops should be friendly but not intimate and should 'avoid such action as would tend to antagonize the white American soldier'. White women should not associate with black GIs at all.<sup>233</sup>

The Colonial Office had not been informed, though it is debateable whether their protests could have stopped the distribution of these notes. The Colonial Office was angry at the 'puerile and prejudiced' attitudes revealed in Dowler's notes. It was not surprising that stories about this official policy found their way into the press and questions about the issue of a 'colour bar' was raised in the House of Commons at the end of September 1942. The Cabinet considered the question in October and decided that the government should not embarrass the American government over the colour bar question.<sup>234</sup>

In practice black GIs found they were more warmly welcomed by the British than the government attitude suggested. The Home Office even sent instructions to Chief Constables 'not to assist American efforts to enforce segregation'. While in some quarters the liaisons formed between white women and black GIs were frowned upon, it seemed that in general the British public distinguished between 'civil rights and sexual wrongs'.<sup>235</sup> Of course prejudice existed. David Reynolds related the apocryphal story of an upper class English woman who wrote to the commander of a local American base, inviting six of his men for Sunday lunch:

But, she added, 'No Jews please'. On Sunday there was a knock at the door and she opened it to find six black Americans standing there. Horrified, she gasped that there must be some mistake. 'Oh no, ma'am', one of them replied, 'Colonel Cohen no make any

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<sup>233</sup> Reynolds, op.cit., p.224 and Smith op.cit., pp.54-7.

<sup>234</sup> Rich, op.cit., p.153.

<sup>235</sup> Smith, op.cit., p.136 and Reynolds, op.cit., p.307.

mistakes'.<sup>236</sup>

On the other hand the black GIs were often favourably compared to their white compatriots as more polite and less aggressive. As one Englishman was reported to have said 'I don't mind the Yanks, but I don't care much for the white fellows they've brought with them'.<sup>237</sup>

Notwithstanding the evidence of general British tolerance the Colonial Office still had to deal with the impact of the American occupation on British colonial subjects. The Colonial Office did what it could to condemn racial prejudice while not publicly embarrassing the American authorities. In mid-1943 the Colonial Office was confronted with the problem of the negative publicity arising from the discrimination experienced by Learie Constantine, the Jamaican cricketer and employee of the Ministry of Labour. Constantine, his wife and child had been refused accommodation at the Imperial Hotel in Russell Square on the grounds that the 200 American officers staying there would object to their presence. The story received publicity in the British press and the representative of the Associated Negro Press in London, Rudolph Dunbar, intended to file a report back to the United States. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, Sir George Gater took the matter up with the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the legal aspects were explored to discover whether there were adequate grounds for a law suit. The Colonial Office considered issuing a statement on the case which resulted in an 'inspired statement' written by Sabine published in the News Chronicle. The MOI sent a guidance telegram to its overseas Information Officers condemning the action taken by the Imperial Hotel. Constantine took legal action against the hotel and successfully sued them and was

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<sup>236</sup> Reynolds, op.cit., pp.303-4.

<sup>237</sup> ibid., p.303.



awarded five pounds in damages.<sup>238</sup>

Paul Emrys-Evans, the Conservative Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions Office, made a statement on behalf of the government in the House of Commons in reply to questions about the Constantine case. Evans reiterated that Stanley 'most strongly' condemned 'any form of racial discrimination against Colonial people in this country'.<sup>239</sup> During a debate on colonial affairs which took place before the Christmas recess in 1943, Stanley took the opportunity to re-state the government's position on the colour bar and the Constantine case:

I have said before, and I say in no unmeasured terms, that I am against it. As far as this country is concerned, the colour bar is a social question. It is a question which it is very difficult for the Governments or Legislatures to interfere. It is difficult by laws to prevent a certain number of ill-mannered and ignorant people allowing ill-manners and ignorance to get the better of them.<sup>240</sup>

The colour bar question was considered internally within the Colonial Office. At the end of 1942 the Colonial Office had asked Sir Mervyn Tew to prepare a report on the legal aspects of the colour bar in the colonies. Christopher Eastwood, former Private Secretary to Lords Lloyd and Moyne and head of the General Department, doubted the practicability of issuing a statement on the basis of Tew's findings. The problem was that the colour bar was not merely a legal problem as it existed in other areas, such as in social relationships.<sup>241</sup>

The Colonial Office therefore considered asking the colonial governments to prepare reports on the enforcement of the colour bar in social situations in their territories. Kenneth Blaxter head of the Social Services Department thought such a request would 'overburden' the colonial governments and suggested that the subject should

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<sup>238</sup> PRO, C0875/14/13, periodic meetings between the MOI, Colonial Secretary and the BBC, 13 August and 3 September 1943; Rich, op.cit., p.161.

<sup>239</sup> Hansard, vol.392, col.190, 22 September 1943.

<sup>240</sup> Hansard, vol.395, col.1921, 17 December 1943.

<sup>241</sup> PRO, C0859/80/13, Eastwood to Lloyd, 4 September 1943.

be raised when the war situation was 'easier'. The question remained whether the Colonial Office should make a statement about its policy towards the colour bar in the colonies. John Keith thought that the statements made in the House of Commons about the Constantine case had already made the Colonial Office's position clear and recommended that further statements would be considered if the need arose in the future. In the meantime he thought that it was a good idea to ask the colonial governments to prepare a report on discrimination in social and administrative fields 'with a view to the gradual elimination of inequalities'. He felt however that the considerable effort which was being made 'to improve the social, economic and political status of Colonial peoples provides an effective answer to allegations of discrimination'.<sup>242</sup>

Sir Thomas Lloyd agreed that the time was not opportune for a general statement, now or in the future, as he doubted that the 'political advantages' of such a statement would not outweigh 'some of the practical and administrative difficulties' of making a comprehensive declaration. The difficulties he foresaw were demands for equal pay and unwanted comparisons between the declaration and the actual record. Instead Lloyd recommended that the colonial governments should be sent a copy of Tew's report with a request that the Secretary of State for the Colonies wanted a report on the social aspects of the colour bar in the colonies. Stanley agreed and the matter was put to one side to be considered at a latter date.<sup>243</sup>

#### Propaganda in the United States

Although it was the government's policy of Allied unity not to embarrass the United States about the subject of race relations, increased efforts were made to educate the American public about the British empire. The Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, hoped that American enthusiasm for a colonial declaration would die 'a natural death' and

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<sup>242</sup> PRO, CO859/126/4, minute by Keith, 28 October 1944.

<sup>243</sup> PRO, CO859/126/4, minute by Lloyd, 17 December 1944.



wanted to let 'sleeping dogs lie'. From mid-1943 global security considerations assumed greater importance. While there were Anglo-American disagreements over the trusteeship question, American policy had 'tended to support rather than break up the Imperial system'.<sup>244</sup> This did not mean that the British government could afford to be complacent about its empire in its relations with United States. Vigilance was necessary lest latent anti-imperial sentiment reappeared or the colonial declaration issue was raised again.

It was seen in chapter four that it had been agreed that the empire publicity campaign in the United States would be intensified once British public opinion had been 'firmed up'. As the Colonial Office explained it to the Foreign Office, the order should be 'Contented Colonies, Contented United Kingdom, Contented United States of America' for, 'unless opinion in this country is correct, we can hardly expect the people of the United States to be what we call "sound"'.<sup>245</sup> Therefore, once the campaign to promote 'partnership' was up and running from mid-1943 consideration of colonial publicity in the United States could be undertaken.

As part of this new campaign Alan Dudley of the North American Department of the Foreign Office proposed that British officers serving in the United States be brought back to Britain for 'refresher courses' because 'most of them might derive a good deal of benefit from an insight into what is being done to stimulate British interest in the Empire'. Huxley thought this was an 'excellent idea' and proposed that the Empire Information Service arrange courses to be held at Oxford the following summer. Sabine agreed and recommended that the people concerned could be given a copy of Hancock's Argument of Empire to stimulate the 'necessary interest'. Darvall, head of the American Division at the MOI concurred and added that the MOI had arranged for officers returning to Britain from America to

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<sup>244</sup> Louis, op. cit., p. 313 and 567.

<sup>245</sup> PRO, FO371/34087/A2404, Rawdon Smith to Dudley, 9 March 1943.

travel via the West Indies and Africa in order to 'enlarge their experience'.<sup>246</sup>

The tremendous increase in the amount of material produced by the Empire Information Service of the MOI for their empire publicity campaign in Britain was also sent to the BIS in the United States. This material was used, as MacDougall had recommended, to endlessly and continually repeat the facts. The Empire Information Service also produced special pamphlets ordered by BIS. For example, an illustrated pamphlet, African Challenge: the Story of the British in Tropical Africa, traced the history of British involvement in Africa from opening up East and West Africa, through the break up of the slave trade, to the achievements of early administrators and missionaries, ending with the political, social and economic work and its importance for the future of Africa.<sup>247</sup>

The British Library of Information in New York continued to answer questions on empire subjects. Material specially produced with an American audience in mind as part of the 'Bulletins from Britain' series included, Sir William McLean, the Colonial Office Representative at the New York World's Fair and head of the Colonial Office Reference Department wrote 'The Colonial Economy, Past Present and Future', Douglas Woodruff, the author and former press officer at the EMB wrote 'Traders Gave Place to Chartered Companies, They in Turn to Governors: Joint Aims of Justice and Self-Government', Harold Butler, minister in charge of propaganda at the British Embassy in Washington wrote 'Labour Conditions in the British Colonies: Progressive Policy is Improving Social Standards: Welfare the Primary Object and Joyce Cary\*, the author and former Colonial Service officer in Nigeria wrote 'Britain's Colonial Record, Founded on Freedom and Law

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<sup>246</sup> PRO, FO371/34093/A7658, Dudley to Huxley, 18 August 1943; Huxley to Dudley, 23 August 1943; Sabine to Dudley, 14 September 1943; minutes of a meeting between the Colonial, Dominions, Foreign and India Offices and the MOI, 16 September 1943.

<sup>247</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, Empire Information Service Progress Report, March - June 1945.



Which Governs Both Rulers and Ruled: New Ideas of Government'.<sup>248</sup> The economic relationship between the colonies and Britain was handled very carefully as it was considered 'bad propaganda' in the United States because it would encourage the American belief that exploitation was the motivating factor in British colonial policy, with the empire regarded as a 'gold mine'. Therefore the emphasis was on what Britain was doing for her colonies, not what they did for Britain. The colonial contribution to the war effort was meant to show that

far from wanting to break away from an oppressive United Kingdom [they] were anxious to contribute what they could from their small resources to the defence of their mother country.<sup>249</sup>

The BIS had a special watching brief to summarise the attitude of American organisations on post-war affairs, including American attitudes towards the British empire. Although the American public was less interested in Britain's African colonies than in India and the Far East, the Foreign Office was encouraged that 'elite' opinion about the empire in Africa was more sound. American academic interest in Africa had been aroused because of 'the bearing of African problems on the negro question' in the United States and had led to the study of the subject. The Phelps-Stokes Fund published a volume, The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint, which contained some criticisms of British colonial administration. It recommended that Africans should be given a larger share of government in their countries and suggested that the goal of ultimate self-government should definitely be accepted. In general, however, the picture of Britain's colonial administration was a 'favourable one'.<sup>250</sup>

David MacDougall the Colonial Office-MOI colonial

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<sup>248</sup> PRO, C0875/18/16/file. 'Bulletins from Britain' articles had a distribution of 60-100,000.

<sup>249</sup> PRO, C0875/16/1, Darvall to Colonial Office, 13 August 1943.

<sup>250</sup> PRO, C0875/18/10, Eastwood to Harlow, 24 June 1942; Campbell to Eden, 14 July 1942.

attache at the British Embassy in Washington presented an acerbic picture of academic liberal Americans interested in the future of Africa who sought, under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, to establish an African Institute in the United States. MacDougall managed to get an invitation to the preliminary planning conference as an observer. According to MacDougall the conference was chaotic. Sixty delegates decided that the first purpose of this conference was to plan for an International Conference at a later date and to decide on the areas of discussion. The proceedings became 'amusing' because an argument broke out between anthropologists and missionaries advocating their particular methods as the only solution to African problems. To add to the chaos Robert Gardener from the Gold Coast wanted an undertaking to invite Africans to the proposed conference 'to prove they were not the helpless victims of imperialism'. It transpired that two West African students studying in New York had been invited to this planning conference but had declined the invitation 'on the grounds that it was undemocratic to select delegates by name'. Nothing was decided after four and half hours of debate and 'nobody listened to anyone else' except to elect a seven person committee to decide who would be invited to the International conference.<sup>251</sup>

On a more serious note the Phelps-Stokes Fund also planned a conference on the war and peace aims in Africa to follow on from the publication of their book on Africa and the Atlantic Charter. Head of the African Department at the Colonial Office, Sir Arthur Dawe agreed with MacDougall's assessment that this development did not 'look promising'. The main problem was the presence of the writer, civil rights campaigner and Director of Research of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, Professor William Du Bois of Atlanta University. Consistent in his criticism of all imperialism, Du Bois, according to MacDougall, 'learns nothing and forgets nothing'. Du Bois's professional life seemed 'to have been built around allegation that the British in 1919 torpedoed

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<sup>251</sup> PRO, CO875/19/6, MacDougall to Sabine, 26 March 1943.



his Pan-African Conference in Paris'. MacDougall feared that the conference would attack Britain's colonial administration in Africa but was relieved that the conference committee had the restraining influences of Mumford, a former superintendent of education in Tanganyika and the former head of the Colonial Department at the Institute of Education of London University, and Edwin Smith, former President of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain.<sup>252</sup>

As part of his work in the United States MacDougall hoped to enlist the services of American writers to undertake publicity about the British empire; 'there is nothing we can say or do in America which is not better said or done by Americans'. He hoped to find an American to produce a pamphlet on Africa which would be 'non-political and non-controversial'. He told Sabine that his efforts had been successful; 'manna has been falling from Heaven' as he had managed to enlist the help of the prominent liberal and Noble Prize winning novelist Pearl Buck and author of The Good Earth to get her husband's publishing company to produce a series of illustrated pamphlets designed to appeal to the families of American troops serving overseas to be called 'So Your Boy is in Africa'.<sup>253</sup> How he managed to secure her cooperation is unclear and remarkable given Buck's past record of campaigning on behalf of the Indian nationalist cause against British policy in India.<sup>254</sup>

Further manna fell from heaven in the shape of the State Department. Unlike the defence departments who supported the continuation of empires to promote stability, the State Department thought in terms of decolonisation and

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<sup>252</sup> PRO, C0875/19/6, memorandum on the Committee on Africa, the War and Peace Aims, 7 May 1943; minute by Dawe, 26 May 1943; MacDougall to Sabine, 8 June 1943.

<sup>253</sup> PRO, C0875/18/19, Macdougall to Sabine, 12 January 1943, 12 June 1943 and 14 June 1943.

<sup>254</sup> Thorne, op.cit., pp.239 and 477.

independence.<sup>255</sup> Henry Villiard, the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department who became head of the African Division of the State Department in 1944, spoke to a conference at the Chatanqua Institute. He outlined the future of American relations with Africa and was subsequently quoted in a State Department Press Release. Villiard, 'sympathetic to the affairs of the British Empire'<sup>256</sup> spoke on the trading opportunities the United States would have in Africa after the war and quoted point four of the Atlantic Charter which envisioned equal access to world trade and raw materials. He noted that the future administration of colonial empires was still under discussion but sought to remind Americans that 'only a small minority of peoples in the colonies have expressed a desire for self-government'.<sup>257</sup> While he thought it was safe to assume that 'many more would ask for it if they knew what it meant and were able to make their wishes known', he also knew it to be true 'that many of the inhabitants of these countries are actually opposed to self-government'.<sup>258</sup> In support of this claim he offered the case of 'numerous Africans' in Nigeria who opposed self-government 'on the grounds that they receive a greater measure of justice from the British courts than they do from the African courts functioning in the same districts, and because of the fear that many of the people would fare less well under a purely African regime'. Even more controversially he echoed sentiments often expressed behind the closed doors in Whitehall which viewed the American attitude towards colonial questions as hypocritical. He reminded his audience that 'we would do well to reflect that we have minorities in territories under the United

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<sup>255</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.6.

<sup>256</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.386.

<sup>257</sup> PRO, C0875/18/19, State Department Press Release, 18 August 1943.

<sup>258</sup> ibid.



States flag who call for self-government'.<sup>259</sup> Even though many Americans might agree with people who called for self-government in areas under American control, Villiard noted 'we would scarcely welcome being advised by our allies to hasten the grant of self-government wherever it is asked'. Moreover, if Americans considered 'how thorny are the problems in our own territories, we will be less hasty in reaching conclusions about Africa'.<sup>260</sup>

These remarks represented a new and more circumspect State Department attitude towards Africa. As MacDougall noted, these remarks were even more significant as this was the first time a member of the State Department had gone on record about American policy towards Africa. The Colonial Office welcomed this statement for it sought to arouse the interest of the American people in African problems. In addition this showed that the State Department had developed a 'sensible attitude' to the question.<sup>261</sup>

The Armed Services had also been asked for advice about the military aspects of Anglo-American relations and the War Office was represented on the Law Committee on American Opinion about the United Kingdom and the Colonies. Following a visit by Lieutenant-Colonel Cantlie to the African Commands in June 1943, the propaganda benefits of ensuring that American troops in transit from the United States formed the best possible opinions of Britain's African colonies during their stay were emphasised. His report highlighted American reactions and the need for better accommodation, particularly in West Africa. Americans, Cantlie noted, had high standards and therefore an American's first impression of a British colony was bound to be unfavourable with its 'corrugated houses, narrow unplanned streets and above all the lack of a "civilised" hotel'. The spartaness of his surroundings would lead him to think that Britain was 'draining West

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<sup>259</sup> ibid.

<sup>260</sup> ibid.

<sup>261</sup> PRO, C0875/18/19, MacDougall to Sabine, 14 September 1943; minute by Roper, 19 November 1943.

Africa's wealth into her own pocket'. In East Africa, first impressions were far better and American visitors to Mombasa and Nairobi had 'nothing but praise for their surroundings'. The Imperial Hotel in Kampala, Uganda was luxurious and would 'compare with any London hotel'.<sup>262</sup> The Colonial Office subsequently asked the governors in West Africa to ensure that the 'itinerant' Americans were 'properly entertained and taken around'.<sup>263</sup>

As a result of MacDougall's visit to the United States, a general agreement between the BIS and the British Embassy in Washington was reached about the future lines of colonial publicity in the United States. Conscious of the audience's predilection for independence the recommendations placed great emphasis on the political future of the empire. First, the nature of the British Commonwealth as 'a living developing organisation, the most successful example in history of large-scale voluntary association between peoples of differing races and creeds'. Second, the Commonwealth's evolutionary character: 'the movement is forward to ultimate self-government'. This process was complete in the Dominions, in Southern Rhodesia and India the goal was 'in sight', in Ceylon it was 'well past the half-way house', West Africa was 'being prepared to follow ... and so on down to North Borneo where political tutelage is in its infancy'. Third, the Commonwealth as a democratic world force: 'among colonial peoples the empire has created the aspirations which are now being satisfied'. Fourth, in addition to teaching the citizens of the empire about 'concepts of equality before the law and of individual freedom', the empire also 'improved their standards of living by means of education, social welfare, and economic development'. Fifth, the post-war world needed the stability of the Commonwealth structure for 'whatever post-war system of international co-operation is envisaged', it would need the experience and structure of the Commonwealth, without which 'it could

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<sup>262</sup> PRO, C0875/19/3, Rowe to Dudley, 15 June 1943.

<sup>263</sup> PRO, F0371/34095/A11033, minutes of the Law Committee meeting, 26 November 1943.



scarcely be more than a political dream'. Finally, that it had been Hitler's aim 'to break up the British empire' and if he achieved this aim 'the war would have been lost'.<sup>264</sup>

MacDougall's other recommendations were approved by the BIS and were designed to be part of a 'long-term programme of adult education' in the United States. These were establishment of a Chair in Colonial History at an American University, the establishment of a British Colonial Research Library in New York and the appointment of a Colonial Advisor to the staff of the British Embassy in Washington.<sup>265</sup> The Colonial Office liked the idea of a Chair in Colonial History as part of general public relations work in the United States because 'we should be reaching, even if only to a limited extent, a number of people whose views in turn might well influence many more Americans'.<sup>266</sup> Several suggestions were made about which university should be the location of the Chair, either at Columbia, Princeton, Harvard or Yale.<sup>267</sup> Funding was difficult but the British Council had expressed an interest and was prepared to bend its rule against involving itself in 'information' activities in the United States.<sup>268</sup>

The Colonial Office agreed that it would be a good idea to establish a Colonial Research Library in New York with a staff of two but did not think that a Colonial Publicity Advisor to the British Embassy in Washington was necessary because of the acute colonial manpower problem. Instead it was thought that if the staff of the Colonial Library were selected carefully they could provide BIS with the necessary guidance. The Colonial Office was already represented in Washington by John MacPherson, former Chief

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<sup>264</sup> PRO, CO875/18/2, memorandum by MacDougall, 'Colonial Propaganda Themes in America', undated.

<sup>265</sup> PRO, CO875/19/7, MacDougall to Butler, 21 June 1943.

<sup>266</sup> PRO, CO875/19/7, minute by Sabine, 15 September 1943.

<sup>267</sup> PRO, CO875/19/7, minute by Thomas, 25 August 1943; minute by Eastwood, 26 August 1943.

<sup>268</sup> PRO, CO875/19/7, minute by Lloyd, 17 September 1943; meeting between the Colonial Office and the British Council, 22 November 1943.

Secretary in Palestine and now the head of the British Colonies Supply Mission (and later a Governor of Nigeria and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1956-9). It was therefore thought possible that he could undertake this kind of work in addition to his other duties.<sup>269</sup> A meeting between the Colonial Office and the MOI was held to brief MacPherson before he left to take up his new post. MacPherson was to draw Butler's attention to the lack of manpower problem in filling any of the posts at the Embassy and the British Library of Information in New York.<sup>270</sup> A compromise was reached whereby the Library would be reinforced with a special colonial section instead of a separate Colonial Research Library.<sup>271</sup>

In spite of these developments tension continued to exist between the Colonial and Foreign Offices over how far the British government should seek to placate the United States about British colonial policy. During the meeting of Allied Foreign Ministers at Moscow in October 1943, the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, raised the question of the joint Anglo-American declaration on the colonies. In December 1943 the Foreign Office reopened the question of a colonial declaration and whether a fresh initiative should be made with the Americans. At a meeting of the Law Committee, Sir George Gater expressed the Colonial Office view that the issue should not be a matter for the Foreign Office alone but should be discussed by the Ministers concerned. Alan Dudley thought that a declaration which dealt not only with 'Colonies (which in practice means our Colonies)' but also with 'the development of tropical backward areas irrespective of

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<sup>269</sup> PRO, CO875/18/12, Thomas to Huxley, 1 November 1943. The Colonial Office hoped for 'great things' from his appointment as he was an 'excellent man' and a 'very live wire', PRO, FO371/34095/A11033, minutes of the Law Committee, 26 November 1943, comments by Sir George Gater.

<sup>270</sup> PRO, CO875/18/12, note of a meeting between the Colonial Office and the MOI, 22 November 1943.

<sup>271</sup> PRO, FO371/34095/A11033, minutes of the Law Committee, 26 November 1943.



their form of government' would be acceptable.<sup>272</sup> However, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley continued to argue publicly against a colonial charter. In a speech in Leeds in January 1944 Stanley maintained that:

A Colonial Charter may be all right if you mean by that a common objective in all Colonial problems, but if you can produce one document which will lay down for all those forty different territories exactly what is going to happen to each of them so that they can advance together at a stated time you will realise that this very diversity ... makes that quite impossible.

Instead, he argued, the British government preferred to talk about 'partnership' towards the colonial empire, 'to enable it to develop on three simultaneous lines of advance political, social and economic'. A charter would not serve any useful purpose as it would not take into account the diversity of conditions in the British empire:

politically, our declared aim is gradually to bring the Colonies to a position of self-government within the British Empire ... we do not want uniform development; we want each to develop the form of government which is most suitable to it.<sup>273</sup>

Christopher Eastwood, head of the General Department at the Colonial Office, opposed reviving the joint declaration. In his view the original raison d'etre for the proposal, i.e. the 'criticism in America and elsewhere of our colonial policy caused by the fall of Malaya', had passed.<sup>274</sup> Richard Law presented Stanley with the Foreign Office view and said that it was clear that the Americans had 'made some advance on their original position regarding colonial questions' and that it was equally clear they were not prepared 'to shelve the question indefinitely'.<sup>275</sup>

Therefore at an inter-departmental meeting between the Colonial, Dominion and Foreign Offices agreed that the

<sup>272</sup> PRO, FO371/40749/U910, Eden to Attlee, 31 January 1944; PRO, FO371/34095/A11033, minute by Dudley, 9 December 1943.

<sup>273</sup> PRO, CO875/20/6, speech by Stanley at Leeds, 15 January 1944.

<sup>274</sup> PRO, CO323/1877/4/1944, minute by Eastwood, 4 April 1944.

<sup>275</sup> PRO, CO323/1877/4/1944, Law to Stanley, 11 April 1944.

British government would oppose a joint declaration on the colonies but would consider committing the government to establishing as part of world organisation machinery good colonial administration for the material and well-being of dependent peoples, for example regional commissions with consultative but not administrative functions.<sup>276</sup>

Stanley agreed to meet Dr. Isaiah Bowman who was part of the Stettinius mission to Britain in April 1944 to discuss the question. Stanley argued that a joint declaration which merely re-stated 'what had been said in this country during the last few months, might well seem an anti-climax'. In any case, he argued, the empire consisted of so many different territories at different stages of development that 'any general principles had to be the lowest common denominator, with the result that they were apt to look pretty thin'. Bowman seemed to be convinced by Stanley's arguments and agreed that no attempt should be made to resurrect a joint declaration on the colonies; any statement with the United States would be linked with the publication of a charter for the new world organisation and regional councils would have consultative not executive powers.<sup>277</sup>

Churchill remained adamant that the government should not make any concessions to critics of British imperial policy, whoever they may be:

There must be no question of our being hustled or seduced into declarations affecting British sovereignty in any of the Dominions or Colonies. Pray remember my declaration against liquidating the British Empire. If the Americans want to take Japanese islands which they have conquered, let them do so with our blessing and any form of words that may be agreeable to them. But 'Hands off the British Empire' is our Maxim and it must not be weakened or smirched to please sob-stuff merchants or foreigners

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<sup>276</sup> PRO, FO371/40749/U3625, minutes of the inter-departmental meeting, 13 April 1944.

<sup>277</sup> PRO, CO323/1847/4/1944, note of Stanley's conversation with Bowman, 18 April 1944; minute by Stanley, 24 April 1944.



of any hue.<sup>278</sup>

Churchill need not have been worried. At the San Francisco Conference, April-June 1945 which drew up the framework of the United Nations Organisation no commitment was made to independence as the ultimate goal of the colonial empires. The Declaration on Non-Self-Governing Territories appeared to accept the British formula of progressive development towards self-government. For the Americans the stability of South-East Asia had become a greater priority than breaking up the European empires.

In January 1944 Gervas Huxley moved on to work on relations with the American troops stationed in Britain. He continued his work for the Empire Division in an advisory capacity and Vincent Harlow, head of the Empire Information Service, continued to work under his direction. Nicholas Mansergh, head of the South African section of the Empire Division, replaced Huxley.<sup>279</sup> Although Colonial Office officials lamented Huxley's departure, they thought they were getting 'the next best thing' in Nicholas Mansergh. Oliver Stanley minuted, 'I am very sorry that Huxley is not coming back. He has been a good friend to us'.<sup>280</sup> Indeed, Huxley had succeeded in improving the relationship between the Colonial Office and the MOI. Huxley had made the most of the 'partnership' theme. Under his guidance there had been a distinct increase in activities to project the colonial empire, both in scope and quality. A similar process occurred in propaganda in East and Central Africa.

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<sup>278</sup> PRO, PREM 4/31/4, minute by Churchill, 31 December 1944.

<sup>279</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, Radcliffe to Gater, 7 January 1944.

<sup>280</sup> PRO, CO875/21/1, minutes by Lloyd, 7 March 1944 and Stanley, 9 March 1944.

## CHAPTER SIX

FROM WAR TO PUBLIC RELATIONS:  
PROPAGANDA IN AFRICA, 1943-45

In the period from 1943 to 1945 thoughts turned from the war to post-war. As in Britain, the propaganda effort in the colonies intensified. Propaganda for East and Central Africa increasingly reflected the need to 'win the peace' and to enlist the support of the colonies in the implementation of colonial policy in the post-war period. East and Central Africa continued to receive the more general MOI 'partnership' propaganda examined in chapter five. In addition to this, other propaganda material was sent from London which was tailored to meet the requirements of Africa. Film propaganda was developed. The work of the Colonial Film Unit increased and a feature film, Men of Two Worlds, was produced which embodied the 'partnership' theme. The British Council explored the possibilities of expanding its work in Africa and their potential for bringing greater understanding between the races was recognised in the Colonial Office. Under the auspices of the PIO in Nairobi, propaganda produced in Africa retained a military flavour. The East African Command also sponsored a Mobile Propaganda Unit. A new picture also developed. Regional co-operation improved and regional production units began to be developed with the post-war period in mind. As an example of the way the Colonial Office wanted the Information Offices in the colonies to develop the work of Harry Franklin in Northern Rhodesia stood out, as he had made the transition from war propaganda to public relations. The colonial governments had become better equipped to win the peace and win African consent for the policy of 'partnership'. However it is also clear that this would always be threatened by political developments in Africa, not least the problem of settler nationalism.

## Film

During 1944 an effort was made to improve the supply of film strips to the colonies. Film strips were considered to be of special value because of the direct



appeal which could be made to 'unsophisticated people'.<sup>1</sup> Film strips would be particularly useful in Tanganyika where they would help in recruiting of Africans whose 'fear of army life' was 'based on ignorance' of conditions. The filmstrips would not only depict war subjects but also those of a long-term, educative nature, and would show the 'necessity and virtue of local effort in social services'.<sup>2</sup> Among the first strips to be sent were 'Road to Victory', 'Britain Today and Tomorrow', 'British Soldiers on the Move', 'the BBC at War', 'Admiral Mountbatten', 'Salute to the Women of Britain', 'Workers Welfare in British Factories' and 'An English Village at War'.<sup>3</sup> Later strips included those more directly relevant to African life like 'Daniel Kaman becomes a Bus-Driver', 'District Commissioner' and 'Kenya Bus-Driver'.<sup>4</sup> In order to facilitate the showing of these film strips the Colonial Office supported the shipping of a large number of projectors to Africa; 150 were sent to the East African Command at the end of 1943.<sup>5</sup>

A film made by the Information Office in Kenya, War Comes to Kenya, was distributed in Britain as War Comes to Africa. Jack Beddington, Director of the MOI's Films Division was 'very impressed' with the film which would be given wide distribution as invariably British audiences found 'any aspect of the Imperial story of great interest'.<sup>6</sup> Although shot by an amateur, it showed 'lovely' views of Kenya and was therefore useful both as war propaganda and 'for the general views of Kenyan scenery

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<sup>1</sup> PRO, INF1/354, Usill to Rawdon-Smith, 17 March 1943.

<sup>2</sup> PRO, INF1/354, Northcote to Wathen, 11 August 1943.

<sup>3</sup> PRO, INF1/354, MOI to Northcote, 21 September 1944.

<sup>4</sup> PRO, INF1/354, MOI to East Africa, December 1944.

<sup>5</sup> PRO, INF1/355, Northcote to Wathen, 12 December 1943.

<sup>6</sup> PRO, CO875/17/4, Beddington to PIO Nairobi, 12 January 1942.

and Kenyan life'.<sup>7</sup> The only criticism the Colonial Office had was the use of the word 'savage' in reference to Africans at one point.<sup>8</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies saw the film which was subsequently tried out on an audience in Clapham. This audience displayed a 'quiet interest' in the film. It gave a round of applause when the Union Jack was run up in Addis Ababa and laughed at a scene of a local airforce officer in shorts and silk shirt who seemed to 'out Georing, Georing (sic) in size'. The Films Division edited the film and it was distributed by RKO.<sup>9</sup>

The Colonial Film Unit continued to expand its production programme. It was estimated that 140,000 Africans were seeing Colonial Film Unit Films each week. By the end of 1943 the Colonial Film Unit employed 23 people.<sup>10</sup> The Unit decided to increase the 'African' element of their output and it was decided to employ an African to be trained in film work who would 'act in an advisory capacity on African life and reactions'.<sup>11</sup> Treasury approval was given on condition that it would not be necessary to 'import' an African.<sup>12</sup> A West African, Sowande, who was already resident in Britain was employed as an advisor and musical director.<sup>13</sup>

The Colonial Film Unit made a series of films on the subject of An African in England showing England through African eyes and the similarities between African and

<sup>7</sup> PRO, CO875/13/17, Moore to Moyne, 4 December 1941. The cameraman was Guy Johnson who had previously made a few films for Imperial Airways.

<sup>8</sup> PRO, CO875/13/17, minute by Sidebotham, 13 January 1942.

<sup>9</sup> PRO, CO875/13/17, minute by Sabine, 9 January 1942; Griggs to Beddington, 31 January 1942; Usill to Sabine, 20 June 1942.

<sup>10</sup> ibid.

<sup>11</sup> PRO, INF1/144, minutes of an OEPEC meeting, 11 June 1942.

<sup>12</sup> PRO, INF1/144, minute by Woodburn, 30 January 1943.

<sup>13</sup> PRO, INF1/144, minute Pyddoke, 31 January 1944.



English life. For example the aim of An African in England - Visits an English Village was to give 'as representative a picture as possible of English village life and to touch on the increasing interest being taken in colonial affairs by the people of this country'. The film told the story of an African student played by a student at St. Martin's School of Art, O.B. Alakija, who had seen a lot of town life wanted to see what life was like in the country. He took a bus out to the country and meets a farmer who showed him around the village where the African was 'charmed by the rural scene'. In the village the African was introduced to the people who live there. He met a labourer and his wife in their cottage with a 'pleasant garden in front and a well kept vegetable plot behind' and the African admired the thatched roof. He was then introduced to the village policeman who 'chats with him in a friendly way'. The African was then taken into the village store and bakery where he met a Womens' Voluntary Service officer who invited him to attend a mothers' meeting later that afternoon in the village hall. The farmer took the African to his son's farm where he saw milking in progress and watched the farmer's wife feed chickens. As the village children left the school the African was introduced to the farmer's grandchildren. Passing the village church the African was introduced to the vicar who was 'obviously delighted to meet the visitor from Africa'. The vicar showed the African the village hall and they watched the unloading of equipment from a mobile cinema van for a film to be shown later that evening. Finally the African was taken to the farmer's house where his wife served tea. During their conversation the farmer expressed an interest in learning more about life in Africa and the film ends with chairs drawn around the fire while the African 'eagerly begins on the story of his homeland and the picture fades out on this friendly scene of mutual interest'.<sup>14</sup>

The scheme to supply raw stock for use by amateur film makers in the African colonies met with success. The

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<sup>14</sup> PRO, INF1/225, Usill to Sabine, 29 March 1945.

Colonial Film Unit supplied 5,000 feet or 212 reels a month to the colonies together with nine cine cameras. In return the unit received material from Northern Rhodesia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika as well as film scripts.<sup>15</sup> Since the scheme produced 'really worthwhile results', the MOI's Films Division asked the Treasury to finance the position of an Assistant Specialist for the Colonial Film Unit to supervise the raw stock scheme until such a time 'as the Operators in the colonies become sufficiently expert to carry on the production work without the guidance of the "parent" Colonial Film Unit'.<sup>16</sup> The Treasury was faced with manpower shortages and could not agree to an extra appointment. The Films Division felt that the Treasury had formed the erroneous impression that the raw stock scheme had been set up to further the 'dabbling by amateurs' and had not understood the value of it in the production programme of the Colonial Film Unit in making films with an authentic 'African background'. In view of the importance which the findings of the report of Mass Education in African Society attached to the value of film in the education of Africans, it was clear that the project would have long-term use.<sup>17</sup> A compromise was found by the employment of staff on a fee payment basis instead.<sup>18</sup> Money was also found by the colonial governments in East Africa to finance the setting up of a Central Photographic Unit to film on behalf of the Colonial Film Unit.<sup>19</sup>

In order to obtain extra material, the Colonial Film Unit also examined films held by various non-theatrical film libraries to see if they could be exhibited in the colonies or in Britain. One thousand films were examined. Sellers was disappointed by the results. He thought that

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<sup>15</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Bradshaw to Beddington, Usill and Fletcher, 29 February 1944.

<sup>16</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Fletcher to Phillips, 22 March 1944.

<sup>17</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Bradshaw to Usill, 19 March 1944; Morgan to Usill, 25 April 1944.

<sup>18</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Fletcher to Woodburn, 24 October 1944.

<sup>19</sup> PRO, INF1/144, Phillips to Campbell, 25 October 1944.



80% of them were of poor quality and 'if they do not convey a wrong impression of the colonies at least they do not directly create that impression which we or anyone with concern for the Colonial Empire would wish'.<sup>20</sup> Films held in the MOI's Central Film Library like Hunting Big game in Africa, African Jungle Life, Wild Animals of Africa and Through Wildest Africa were criticised for being of poor photographic quality and because the animals were so far off they could not be seen in sufficient detail. Three films on the produce of East Africa Shamba Ya Kahana about coffee in Tanganyika, Shamba Ya Chai about tea in Tanganyika and Shamba Ya Kabani about sisal production were considered to be of too poor in quality to be shown because of their bad diagrams and maps. Kashu the Head-Hunter was described as depicting life in native Africa but on viewing was found to be 'a crude thriller staged in New Guinea'. Some were considered suitable for showing to school children and were placed in the Central Film Library of the Imperial Institute. Peoples of Kenya was considered 'excellent and interesting material' as the people were shown in a straightforward manner against their natural background. Bwamba was a little incoherent but gave schoolchildren a view of the arts and crafts of the primitive peoples living in Nyasaland. Similarly, Bugufi was considered to be an 'outstanding' film showing the primitive industry of hoe making in Nyasaland, from the 'gathering of the iron ore' to 'the laborious task of beating out the hoe'.<sup>21</sup>

The Colonial Film Unit faced difficulties in obtaining enough raw footage to increase their output of films. As part of the new effort to educate British and overseas audiences about the colonial empire, the Colonial Office asked the MOI to send a camera unit to the colonies to do the necessary filming. The Colonial Office's request, however, met the recurrent problem of manpower shortages. The Secretary of State for the Colonies had already

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<sup>20</sup> PRO, CO875/17/17, Girkins 13 December 1942.

<sup>21</sup> ibid.

approached Ernest Bevin the Minister of Labour and National Service to ask for a 'freeze' on film industry staff. Stanley was not successful and was told that individual cases would have to be considered on their merits.<sup>22</sup> Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Thomas Lloyd wrote to Kenneth Grubb, Controller of the MOI's Overseas Division, on behalf of Oliver Stanley to complain about the 'disappointingly slow progress' made on the supply of film from the colonies. Lloyd emphasised the need to 'stimulate the interest and participation of Colonial peoples in the war effort and to publicise the Colonies here and abroad'. Indeed, Lloyd argued, there was 'an urgent demand for material for films to be exhibited in this country, in neutral countries, in the U.S.S.R. and especially in America'. In addition, the Colonial Film Unit depended 'almost entirely on getting adequately shot material from the Colonies'. A market existed for colonial films and both the MOI and the Colonial Office were 'agreed on the need for satisfying it'. Therefore Thomas Lloyd asked the MOI to make colonial films a priority and that a director-cameraman should be made available to visit the colonies. The Colonial Office welcomed the recommendation made at a meeting with the MOI to bring stills photographers over from the colonies and to train them to be film cameramen. But that was a long-term measure and even if the scheme were put into operation immediately, it would take at least 18 months before actual films were produced. The Colonial Office sought a faster solution by obtaining the services of four director-cameramen, one each for East and West Africa and two for the West Indies. For East Africa Lloyd suggested that the MOI employ Dr. Johnson who had made films for Imperial Airways and did the camera work for War Comes to Kenya.<sup>23</sup>

Grubb agreed the best solution was to employ the services of a director-cameraman but he noted that individuals 'capable of working entirely on their own in an

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<sup>22</sup> PRO, CO875/17/3, Bevin to Stanley, 8 March 1943.

<sup>23</sup> PRO, CO875/17/2, Lloyd to Grubb, 11 August 1943.



unfamiliar environment' were 'very rare birds'. The claims on their time were already great as film units would be needed shortly to send to liberated territories. Grubb was, however, prepared to 'attach a high priority to the needs of the colonies' as long as this did not conflict with other more pressing needs. It transpired that Dr. Johnson was not available to go and film in East Africa. The best that the MOI could suggest was that the Colonial Office joined with them in making representations to the Ministry of Labour to prevent the call up of directors and cameramen on a case by case basis.<sup>24</sup> The Colonial Office was forced to be satisfied with this. Lloyd wrote to Huxley that the Colonial Office agreed the training of expert stills photographers from the colonies would be better than nothing and that the Office was prepared to support MOI representations to the Ministry of Labour in individual cases.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the manpower shortages, the Crown Film Unit produced a number of films with a colonial content. For example, material from South Africa and the Rhodesias was used in the film Morning, Noon and Night which depicted a day in the life of the British Commonwealth in wartime. Similarly, Rediscovery of Britain showed the experience of Commonwealth troops in Britain and the changes they had observed. It was arranged that its release would coincide with Empire Day 24 May 1943. However, the release date had to be put back because film had not arrived from the colonies.<sup>26</sup> Although it was not supposed to be a 'song of victory', and would have a composite commentary representing different empire and Commonwealth points of view of individual representatives of the empire on the lines of those who had taken part in the BBC's special Empire Day Postscript. The different points of view were resolved in the conclusion of the film which would leave

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<sup>24</sup> PRO, CO875/17/2, Grubb to Lloyd, 10 September 1943.

<sup>25</sup> PRO, CO875/17/2, Lloyd to Huxley, 8 October 1943. John Page the cameraman was released by the Admiralty to film in West Africa.

<sup>26</sup> PRO, INF1/58/file.

the audience in no doubt of the 'importance of the Commonwealth of Nations both now and after the war'.<sup>27</sup>

Other Crown Unit films with an African background included African Girl as May Queen, Complete Victory in Africa, Plainsmen of Barotseland, Masai Gentleman, Fighting Men of Africa, East African Locust Control, Town Planning and Slum Clearance in Africa and Report from Africa.<sup>28</sup>

#### Men of Two Worlds

Undoubtedly the most successful production resulting from the Colonial Office's cooperation with the Films Division of the MOI was the feature film Men of Two Worlds. It brought to the screen the theme of 'partnership'. The idea had been first thought up as a result of the employment of writer, journalist and film critic of the BBC, Mrs. Arnot Robertson by the Films Division to work on treatments for films about the colonies in 1942. The initial idea had developed from a conversation between Sabine and Robertson based on Sabine's experiences as a District Officer in East Africa. The project, originally titled 'White Ants', was the story of 'how witchcraft and superstition which has a great hold on the natives is conquered in a dramatic way by a District Officer'. In order to break the power of the local witch doctor the District Officer used 'the faith and courage' of an African schoolmaster. Jack Beddington, the head of the Films Division, thought it was a promising story as there was a strong plot and 'a metaphysical theme which is a gift to a script writer looking for a central peg'. Its advantage was that it could show 'both good and bad natives: and though it does not show bad white people it hints at the defeats from lack of faith, etc., etc., which is the negative side of our own race when working in the

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<sup>27</sup> PRO, INF1/58, minutes of production meetings, 30 June and 1 July 1943; PRO, CO875/7/14, report by Franklin, on the activities of the Information Office in Northern Rhodesia, July 1942-June 1943, 21 July 1943.

<sup>28</sup> PRO, INF1/56, OEPEC paper, 8 January 1945.



Colonies'.<sup>29</sup> Doubts were expressed in the Colonial Office about the desirability of portraying witch doctors and the 'evils of unenlightened superstition' instead of the positive achievements of colonial rule. Particularly since 'so much is now happening and is being aimed at in the new enlightened Colonial policy that one can be fully justified in asking the public to forget the mistakes of the past while learning something of the present and the future'.<sup>30</sup> It was difficult, however, to see how a dramatic feature film could be constructed around the theme of good colonial administration alone. The Films Division therefore proceeded with the project and reported to the Colonial Office that the American studio Columbia Pictures, would produce it with Paul Robeson in the starring role of the African schoolmaster.<sup>31</sup>

The deal with Columbia fell through. Instead the MOI approached Filippo del Giudice, the managing director of the British film company Two Cities in November 1942.<sup>32</sup> The Films Division arranged for the release of the director Thorold Dickinson\* from the Army Kinematograph Service to direct the film for Two Cities.<sup>33</sup> Arnot Robertson did not wish to turn her treatment into a screenplay. Dickinson's original choice for screenwriter was Louis MacNiece. MacNiece, however, was under contract to the BBC's Features

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<sup>29</sup> PRO, CO875/17/6, Sabine to Lloyd, 19 August 1943; CO875/17/1, Beddington's memorandum on Colonial Film Material, 14 April 1942.

<sup>30</sup> PRO, CO875/17/1, minute by Collins, 23 June 1942.

<sup>31</sup> PRO, CO875/17/1, minute by Keating, 2 August 1942.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, Britain Can Take It: the British Cinema in the Second World War, (Oxford, 1986), p.198. Aldgate and Richards also cite a letter from del Giudice to Beddington assuring him that 'it is the policy of this company not to make any films whether on subjects connected directly with the war or not without the approval of the MOI'. Two Cities also cooperated with the MOI to produce The Way Ahead and The Way to the Stars.

<sup>33</sup> For an illuminating account of the making of Men of Two Worlds c.f. Jeffrey Richards biography of Thorold Dickinson, Thorold Dickinson: the Man and His Films (London, 1986), chapter six.

and Drama Department and the BBC was unwilling to release him. Dickinson's wife Joanna drew his attention to a pamphlet she had read, The Case for African Freedom by the writer and former Colonial Service officer in Nigeria, Joyce Cary.<sup>34</sup> During the 1930s and 1940s Cary had been an active member of the Liberal Party and The Case For African Freedom had been written for the Liberal Book club.<sup>35</sup> In addition to his political writings, Cary was the author of The African Witch and Mister Johnson. The screen play became a collaborative effort between Cary and Dickinson.

A number of actors were discussed for the lead roles. Dickinson thought that John Mills was unsuitable for the part of the District Commissioner and he hoped that 'big names' could be found because the film presented a 'grand opportunity for dramatic acting, psychological character study and outdoor action'. He hoped Leslie Howard would be available and considered Wendy Hiller for the part of the young English doctor, who would provide the romantic interest in the film.<sup>36</sup>

Sabine cooperated fully with Two Cities throughout the project. He approached the Board of Trade for technicolour stock which was rationed during the war. Sabine's enthusiasm infected the staff of Two Cities:

We have been particularly fired ourselves by all that Mr. Sabine has told us of the work of the Colonial Office and we feel more than ever the responsibility we have in making this film, for if it is successful it can be the forerunner of more excellent films about Africa and our colonies, and should do very much to correct prejudice and ignorance everywhere on this complicated and difficult subject.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., p.113.

<sup>35</sup> M.M. Mahood, Joyce Cary's Africa (London, 1964), p.68. Mahood's biography of Cary also contains an assessment of his screenplay in relation to his other works of fiction.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, INF1/218, Beddington to Kimberly, director of the Army Kinematograph Service, 10 November 1942; Sutro, producer at Two Cities, to Beddington, 17 December 1942; Roberts, BBC to Woodburn, 24 December 1942; Dickinson to Sutro, 28 May 1943.

<sup>37</sup> PRO, C0875/17/6, Sutro to Sabine, 22 January 1943.



Originally the film was to be set in West Africa but this was changed to Tanganyika. Dickinson and his production team visited Tanganyika between January and May 1943 where he received the full cooperation of the government. It was an eventful trip. Dickinson became ill with malaria and the ship carrying their movie camera and film stock was sunk leaving the crew with only a stills camera.<sup>38</sup> Dickinson agreed that his unit would also take photographic 'stills' for use by the MOI in Britain while he was in East Africa.<sup>39</sup>

The government of Tanganyika appeared excited at the prospect of the film having a Tanganyikan background. Although the script avoided direct mention of Tanganyika, Mount Kilimanjaro in the background would identify it as Tanganyika. Freeston, the Information Officer in Tanganyika, was impressed with Dickinson's approach and told him that 'the basic problem - of reconciling box-office appeal with reality - has been solved with astonishing success'. Sabine was grateful for all the assistance Freeston had given Dickinson during his visit and emphasised the importance of the project because it 'should have the sort of success here that we cannot hope to get by any amount of press articles or broadcast talks'.<sup>40</sup>

Casting the African schoolmaster required sensitive handling. Two Cities wanted to cast Rudolph Dunbar. Dunbar was from British Guiana and was the London representative of the Associated Negro Press. Sabine thought the idea had much to commend it. Dunbar was, in his view, 'sincere and reliable' and had sent 'a good deal of useful material to the negro press in America'. Although Sabine was concerned that the casting of Dunbar might 'raise rather awkward questions', he thought it might have the advantage of allowing Dunbar to see much that

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<sup>38</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson..., p.113.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, C0875/15/6, committee on colonial publicity in the United Kingdom, 30 March 1943.

<sup>40</sup> PRO, C0875/17/6, Freeston to Sabine, 30 April 1943; Sabine to Freeston, 22 May 1943.

'would impress him and a good deal that would also shake some of his ideas both on the capacity and the standard of life of his brothers in Africa'. Sabine's worries came to nothing as *Two Cities* eventually casted Robert Adams, a West Indian actor, as the schoolmaster.<sup>41</sup>

Not everyone was satisfied with the first draft of the screenplay written by Cary and Dickinson. The main African character, a teacher in the original treatment, had been transformed into a black composer. Ian Dalrymple, Head of the Crown Film Unit thought it was 'pretentious and highbrow'.<sup>42</sup> Arnot Robertson who wrote the original treatment, thought it was 'an entirely unobjectionable but uninspired bit of committee work'. She criticised it for losing the quality of the original idea as it 'lacked fire':

there is hardly any effective conflict in this version and very little suspense. The Good White Man is so impeccably good there is never any doubt that he will prevail over the evil forces which really haven't a fair chance.<sup>43</sup>

Others disagreed. Ivor Cummings from Sierra Leone working in the Social Services Department of the Colonial Office, also examined the screenplay. Although he recognised that 'exaggeration appears in all films' and that 'superficially' the screenplay was 'fiction'. But he thought the film was valuable in 'demonstrating to people who are ill-informed about the African countries that these countries must be brought fully into line with the so-called civilised nations'.<sup>44</sup> Nunn May, assistant director of the Films Division thought it had 'the makings of a really good film story, and that it shows British administration through appropriately rose coloured spectacles'. Gervas Huxley, head of the Empire Division of the MOI, thought it would make 'a really interesting film

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<sup>41</sup> PRO, C0875/17/6, Sabine to Seel, 1 May 1943.

<sup>42</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., p.115.

<sup>43</sup> PRO, INF1/218, minute by Robertson, 28 May 1943.

<sup>44</sup> PRO, C0875/17/6, Cummings to Sabine, 2 August 1943.



of considerable propaganda value'.<sup>45</sup>

Sabine was delighted with the results and called it 'the first realistic film about African administration' and thought it would have 'a good effect'. He commended Dickinson's attitude towards the project for he had shown 'a high appreciation of the importance of getting a realistic treatment and of not falling into the temptation of making a purely sensational film'. Similarly, the project was welcomed in East Africa. The Tanganyika Standard proclaimed it as being 'authentic Africa on the screen at last'.<sup>46</sup>

The film took six weeks to film on location in Tanganyika. Disaster struck when it was discovered that 90% of the film shot was unusable when it came to be processed. As a result Tanganyika had to be reproduced at the Two Cities studio back in England.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless the final product fitted the 'partnership' theme beautifully by showing Britain's vision for the future of Africa, guiding Africans in a partnership for progress and how education can overcome superstition. It starred Eric Portman as the District Commissioner and Phyllis Calvert as the earnest doctor. The story centred around a Tanganyikan, Kisenga, played by Robert Adams. Kisenga had studied music in England. The film opened with a lunchtime concert at the National Gallery of Kisenga's work, 'Baraza' the African for 'heated discussion'. The music was written by Sir Arthur Bliss and sounded like a mixture between a Gershwin concerto and African tribal music.<sup>48</sup> The reception of Baraza was so enthusiastic that a concert agent wanted to sign up Kisenga for a tour. But Kisenga knew where his duty laid. The very next day he flew to Tanganyika and became an Education Officer in the Colonial Service back

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<sup>45</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., p.116.

<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO875/17/6, Sabine to Lloyd, 19 August 1943; Tanganyika Standard, 19 November 1943.

<sup>47</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., p.119.

<sup>48</sup> The music was praised for being 'one of the finest film music works ever written' by John Huntley in his 1948 book on film music. Quoted in ibid, p.122.

with his own people the Litu. In Kisenga's absence there had been a serious outbreak of sleeping sickness. His District Commissioner, Portman, gave him the task of trying to persuade his old tribe to leave the Tsetse fly infested area to be resettled in a safer place. Naturally the Litu did not want to leave their homes. The scene was set for a confrontation, with Kisenga, caught in the middle, between 'old Africa' and the newly-educated Africa. The tribal witchdoctor, Magole, cast a spell on Kisenga: if Kisenga lived the tribe would leave the infected area but if he died the tribe would stay. Under the weight of conflicting emotions Kisenga feels increasingly isolated.

Earlier in the film Kisenga opened a school in his district and spoke of the value of education:

knowledge is the only power that can fight against man's enemies: diseases and superstition, and the worst of all fear. Fear stands in the way of all progress not only in Africa but in all the world. People hate because they fear to learn to know how to think.

So good was the education he received from the British that he told his sister, 'I thought I had two worlds, now I have none at all'. Kisenga was so depressed that he became ill in his hut and began to hallucinate. In a dream sequence illustrating his dilemma he was held down by the witchdoctor, his mother and his father. He tried to resist and held up his arms to discover that they had turned white. He tried to leave his hut. One door lead to tribal drumming. The other lead to a symphony orchestra which was the path he chose. He could not however escape the power of the witchdoctor who stabbed Kisenga. Phyllis Calvert and Portman argued about Kisenga. The beautiful doctor blamed the District Commissioner for placing so much responsibility on Kisenga's shoulders that he gave up the will to live. Portman came to the rescue and organised the children of the village to sing one of Kisenga's compositions. The intervention of Portman saved Kisenga by telling him that 'his people' were singing for him and that he was needed by them or they would be lost. Kisenga revived. The power of the witchdoctor had failed and Magole was run out of the village. The film ended on a



positive note as the tribe, led by Kisenga, moved to their new area and to safety.

In spite of its intentions, Jeffrey Richards has criticised Dickinson's film as 'perhaps his least successful' and compared it unfavourably with Powell and Pressburger's Black Narcissus which was also in technicolour, also produced at Denham and also dealt with a clash of cultures. Although individual elements of the music and dream sequence of Men of Two Worlds were acclaimed its 'didactic nature' and the impression that in spite of efforts to the contrary, the African background was a 'fake' were criticised. The Spectator found it 'disappointing'. Dilys Powell in The Sunday Times said 'It is quite often dull. But Men of Two Worlds is on the right track: it has a subject, it is about something real, it is getting somewhere'. Elspeth Huxley, writing under her maiden name Grant, said in the Daily Graphic: 'It is not without faults. It is repetitive. The colour is erratic. The crowd scenes are stiffly handled. But an interesting problem is presented and treated without a vestige of the smugness one fears in the discussion of racial differences'. Years later Thorold Dickinson described the experience the experience: 'the whole thing was total misery'.<sup>49</sup> Nor was Men of Two Worlds a milestone in the career of Joyce Cary. According to Mahood the fact that 'it was a commissioned work seems to have deprived it of the vitality which informs Cary's other African stories' and the dialogue was 'overlaid with the schoolmasterly tone peculiar to most productions of the wartime MOI'.<sup>50</sup>

In artistic and critical terms then the film was not a success and arguably these were the only measures which counted. While it may have portrayed 'the classic white liberal faith in education'<sup>51</sup> and was overflowing in worthy intentions it was far more than merely this. It was an accurate representation of colonial policy as it existed in

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<sup>49</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., pp.128-9 and 133.

<sup>50</sup> Mahood, op.cit., p.70.

<sup>51</sup> Richards, Thorold Dickinson ..., p.127.

the 1940s. The film embodied the propaganda theme of 'partnership' and so in this more limited sense, by getting the empire up on the big screen it was a success. That the empire of 'partnership' proved to be less exciting subject matter for a feature film than the tales of conquest of the imperial epics of the 1930s was hardly the fault of those involved in its production.

#### The British Council

Throughout the war the British Council sought to increase its work in the colonies. In general the Colonial Office supported the Council because it recognised the value its work in furthering understanding between British and colonial peoples in the postwar period. On a cultural level, the Council's work could lend support to the Colonial Office's attempt to win the peace in post-war Africa. In 1941 the Council had appointed Sir Angus Gillan, a former officer of the Sudan political service, to supervise the Council's empire activities. Initial activity in the colonies was limited to the territories which had been subjected to the propaganda of foreign powers, Malta, Cyprus, Palestine and Aden.<sup>52</sup> In early 1941, the Colonial Office, under Lord Lloyd who simultaneously held the post of the Chairman of the British Council, had welcomed any increase in Council activities in the colonies. Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Social Services, Sir Charles Jeffries, was appointed as the Colonial Office's representative on the Executive Committee of the Council and the Budget sub-committee. Jeffries thought the Council could expand by establishing local Institutes in the colonies and also help in supplying English teachers.<sup>53</sup> Lord Moyne, Lord Lloyd's successor as Secretary of State for the Colonies, was keen that the Colonial Office should 'take advantage' of the proposal to cooperate with the British Council and held out the

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<sup>52</sup> PRO, BW2/313, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the British Council, 3 December 1940; Robertson to Cadogan, 2 September 1941.

<sup>53</sup> PRO, C0859/81/21, minute by Jeffries, 15 March 1941.



possibility of the Council receiving Colonial Welfare and Development money to fund some of its activities.<sup>54</sup>

At a meeting between the Colonial Office and the British Council in May 1941 it was agreed that the first two areas where the Council should expand would be the West Indies and West Africa.<sup>55</sup> It was also agreed that the Reverend Guthrie, lecturer in Swahili at the School of Oriental and African Studies, should visit and report on expansion in East Africa. The Colonial Office agreed to finance his trip and the East African Governor's Conference agreed to cooperate fully during his visit. The majority of territories would 'welcome' the expansion of British Council activities in East Africa.<sup>56</sup>

In the meantime the British Council investigated the ways in which the Council would fund the proposed expansion and discussed with the Colonial Office the direction its 'cultural' work should take. The Foreign Office was opposed to any colonial expansion which might divert funding from British Council work in foreign countries. The Treasury thought that there might be problems in the future as it would be difficult to distinguish between activities of a 'cultural propaganda' nature and those of a 'welfare' nature. Moreover, at a time when the British Council's future post-war funding was not guaranteed, talk of colonial expansion was tentative and cautious.<sup>57</sup>

The Colonial Office was not discouraged by the attitudes of the Foreign Office and the Treasury. Jeffries argued that the case for colonial expansion was even stronger than its activities in foreign countries since 'we have direct responsibility for strengthening the links

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<sup>54</sup> PRO, C0859/81/21, minute by Moyne, 19 March 1941; minute by Jeffries, 1 April 1941.

<sup>55</sup> PRO, C0859/81/21, minutes of the joint meeting, 26 May 1941.

<sup>56</sup> PRO, C0859/82/6, Gillan to Jeffries, 28 October 1941; EAGC to Colonial Office, 4 May 1942.

<sup>57</sup> PRO, C0859/81/21, Minutes of an inter-departmental meeting between the Foreign Office, the Treasury, Dominions Office, Colonial Office, MOI and the British Council, 17 October 1941; Kingsley Wood to Stanley, 11 March 1943.

between them and this country'. As Oliver Stanley explained to Kingsley Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the British Council could supplement the work of official machinery in the colonies, particularly 'by bringing people of different races together in common cultural enterprises' and wanted to see the Council encouraged 'in every possible way'.<sup>58</sup>

Kingsley Wood warned that the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office would have to compete for funding from the British Council's 'common purse'. While Wood was not prepared to give the Colonial Office preferential financial treatment, he was prepared to consider schemes on their own merits.<sup>59</sup>

The British Council outlined its proposals in a memorandum about the future development of the Council. In the territories of the empire, argued the British Council:

[while] making all due allowance for difference in race, origin or constitution there is in all of these countries something British; and in bringing Great Britain to them we are bringing to them something in which they already have a share.

Teaching English, a major component of their activities in foreign countries, was not seen as part of their colonial programme as this was already being done by the colonial governments. Planning for the future was based on the assumption that there was a 'pre-existing sympathy with British traditions and culture even though accompanied in some cases by a suspicion of British policy'. It was thought that the Council would have a further advantage in that there would be little danger of their activities being suspected as 'political propaganda'. Therefore the main aim of Council activities in the colonies would be the 'interpretation of British life and thought', while also 'promoting closer cultural relations' by encouraging an

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<sup>58</sup> PRO, CO859/81/21, Stanley to Kingsley Wood, 17 March 1943.

<sup>59</sup> PRO, CO859/81/21, Kingsley Wood to Stanley, 20 April 1943.



interest in the colonies at home.<sup>60</sup>

The Council did not seek to establish British Institutes in the colonies as the colonies were British anyway. Instead they would encourage the colonies own cultural societies or institutes, for example, the Lagos Institute or the Trinidad Institute. These Institutes would provide a 'common ground where men of goodwill of any race or colour can meet, without the restraints of host and guest or of office formality, to exchange ideas and discuss mutual problems'. Therefore the larger part of its work would be in supporting local libraries.<sup>61</sup>

Jeffries was concerned about possible British Council tendencies to see the interpretation of the colonies to Britain as part of its functions. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir George Gater, thought the time had come for a clear definition of British Council responsibilities. The Council agreed that it was not part of their work to publicise the colonies at home and that they should be limited to maintaining contact.<sup>62</sup>

Jeffries thought that in view of the rapid expansion of the Council's work, a general review should be undertaken, preferably by a Cabinet Committee. He thought that the Council should be reorganised, particularly as the number of people employed had increased. One area of concern was control of the Council, especially over financial matters, which Jeffries considered to be 'weak'. Financial control was exercised through the Executive Committee, while the day-to-day activities of the Council were supervised by the Council's Chairman, Sir Malcolm Robertson. Robertson, a former Ambassador to Buenos Aires, could not devote all his time to the Council as he was also the Conservative M.P. for Mitcham. Instead Jeffries wanted to see more effective control by a new Board of

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<sup>60</sup> PRO, CO859/127/5, White to the Colonial Office, 7 March 1944.

<sup>61</sup> ibid.

<sup>62</sup> PRO, CO859/127/5, minute by Jeffries, 8 March 1944; minute by Gater 13 March 1944; Colonial Office to White, 17 March 1944 and White to Colonial Office, 23 March 1944.

Governors.<sup>63</sup>

While Sabine was prepared to accept the broad definition of the Council's aim 'to develop closer cultural relations between the United Kingdom and the Colonies for the purpose of benefitting the British Commonwealth of Nations', he had certain reservations about how this objective could be secured. Far from being a purely cultural organisation, its work would have political implications and would need close monitoring:

It may well be based on culture, using that term in the most liberal sense. But if it aims at bringing people of different races together in the common enjoyment of intellectual and cultural pursuits, with all the difficult psychological adjustments that this involves; if it aims at bringing knowledge of different aspects of British life and thought to considerable cross sections of Colonial peoples and creating in their minds a feeling of sympathy and admiration for things British; then, the political implications of such a development must be of major importance. They must be related to political realities and must be kept under constant review.

Sabine thought that the Council or some such body could make a 'most valuable contribution towards creating the conditions in which the progressive development of our Colonial policy will have the best chances of success'. He doubted, however, whether this could be achieved by the Council under its present direction. He agreed with Jeffries' ideas for more effective control of the Council and thought the Council needed to be more precise about how its objectives in the colonies would be implemented because as they were presently conceived they were nothing more than 'vague, ambitious and diffuse programmes'.<sup>64</sup>

Andrew Cohen\*, Assistant Secretary of State for the Colonies responsible for Central Africa, thought that the Council had an important part to play in the post-war relationship between the colonial governments and the people, particularly in the 'more primitive Colonies'. In Africa, he argued, for the vast majority of the people 'their only contact with British ideas is through the

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<sup>63</sup> PRO, C0859/127/5, Jeffries to Gater, 15 March 1944.

<sup>64</sup> PRO, C0859/127/5, minute by Sabine, 2 June 1944.



Government and Government officials'. In the governed-governing relationship, 'one of the main weaknesses of British Colonial Administration ... has been over-paternalism, an excessive affection for the "noble savage", the failure to understand and the difficulty in making contact with the rising educated or semi-educated classes'. In Cohen's opinion, it was here that the Council could make its contribution to the problems of development in the colonies because it could provide the means of 'bringing together the British and the educated local communities'. This was, he thought, just as important as the actual task of spreading British culture and ideas. Like Sabine, Cohen thought that, while the Council's aims could be agreed you could not 'bring people together just for the sake of bringing them together'. The Council needed to formulate specific programmes.<sup>65</sup>

Christopher Eastwood, head of the General Department identified other British Council problems. In his capacity as Principal Private Secretary to Lord Lloyd, Eastwood had experience of Council work and knew a number of its staff privately. He thought that the abilities of those employed by the Council varied. Some were 'wild', 'odd' and 'lightweight', while others were, in his view, 'extremely good'. A major difficulty appeared to be:

that organising the staff of the British Council must be almost as difficult as organising the staff of the B.B.C. since in each case you have to try and instil habits of administrative and financial efficiency into people with more or less of the 'artistic temperament' (to use a horrible phrase) and the two do not usually go together.

Eastwood had also been informed that the staff were not happy under the Chairmanship of Robertson. On the other hand he had received good reports of Council work in Palestine and Aden and he pointed out this kind of cultural work was better done by a 'semi-official body' like the British Council than by colonial governments and that the Colonial Office 'should never have got the money for it

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<sup>65</sup> PRO, C0859/127/5, minute by Cohen, 3 June 1944.

from the Treasury'.<sup>66</sup>

The British Council approached the Colonial Office with a proposal to fund colonial expansion from Colonial Development and Welfare money. The Council noted that during a debate on the Act there had been 'considerable criticism of the slow rate of spending'. The Council looked to Colonial Development and Welfare money to cover the costs of expansion such as buildings in the colonies.<sup>67</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for the Colonies responsible for Economics and Finance, Frederick Pedler, noted that it was necessary to draw a line between:

- a) activities which are designed to assist the work of the Colonial Government Departments in improving the social and economic position of the inhabitants and,
- b) activities which are designed to publicise British culture, institutions or opinion in the Colonies, and to stimulate interest for the Colonies in the United Kingdom.<sup>68</sup>

Jeffries thought that in principle that 'if British taxpayers' money is involved in 'substantial capital or recurrent expenditure' it ought to come via the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and not via the British Council'.<sup>69</sup>

These questions about the financing and organisation of the British Council were delayed until the report of a sub-committee of the Cabinet Committee on the machinery of government chaired by the former Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the India Office and former Director General of the MOI, Sir Findlater Stewart.<sup>70</sup> The Colonial Office presented a memorandum to the Stewart Committee which reviewed the Council's plans of expansion in the colonies and made the case for the kind of reorganisation Jeffries had been advocating. This memorandum described the

<sup>66</sup> PRO, CO859/127/5, minute by Eastwood, 5 June 1944.

<sup>67</sup> PRO, CO859/127/3, Gillan to Jeffries, 21 March 1944.

<sup>68</sup> PRO, CO859/127/4, minute by Pedler, 4 September 1944.

<sup>69</sup> PRO, CO859/127/4, Pedler to Caine, reporting a conversation with Jeffries, 14 September 1944.

<sup>70</sup> A.J.S. White, The British Council: the First 25 Years, 1934-1959 (London, 1965), pp.53-7.



relations between the Colonial Office and the British Council as generally 'very satisfactory'. In addition to Jeffries being represented on the British Council's Executive and the Budgetary Sub-Committee there was a Joint Colonial Office-British Council Standing Committee and the Colonial Office was consulted informally about the appointment of staff to the colonies. The Colonial Office noted that these arrangements had evolved 'through trial and error' and they were 'ripe for review'. Moreover, the memorandum argued that cooperation between the Colonial Office and the Council was even more important than cooperation between the Foreign Office and the Council because the Secretary of State for the Colonies was answerable to Parliament for all matters concerning the colonies and, as such, had the ultimate responsibility for their 'cultural advancement' since Parliament provided the Council's funding. Therefore the British Council had undertaken its activities on an 'agency basis' for the Colonial Office. This did not mean that the Colonial Office sought a rigid control of the Council's activities in the colonies. It could still 'be allowed a reasonable freedom to apply its own methods and practice in working out a previously agreed policy'. It meant that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had to 'have an effective voice in determining the scope and functions of the Council in the territories under its jurisdiction' through a local 'charter' which would set out the terms within which the Council would operate. The changes the Colonial Office sought were effective representation on the Finance and Agenda Committee, continued representation on the Executive Committee and Colonial Office representation on Selection Boards for appointments in colonial territories with the Secretary of State for the Colonies being given the right to veto appointments which he considered 'unsuitable'.<sup>71</sup>

Presented in early 1945, Sir Findlater Stewart's

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<sup>71</sup> PRO, CO859/127/5, 'Colonial Office's Memorandum for Sir Findlater Stewart: British Council Activities in Relation to the Colonies', undated.

Report on the future of the British Council met some of the Colonial Office's requirements. Stewart recommended the post-war continuance of the British Council and that it should continue as an independent body and not be absorbed by any government department. He recommended that the Council should be asked to prepare a five year plan and that it should receive government assurance that funding would be available for the period of the plan. The Executive Committee would be replaced by a governing board of six or seven under a full time chairman on which government departments would not be represented.<sup>72</sup> Stewart accepted that the Council would operate in the colonies as an 'agent' of the Colonial Office and would be separately funded out of the Colonial Office vote. Although the Colonial Office would not be represented on the proposed governing body it would be able to exercise control through a Joint Standing Committee. As Jeffries commented 'I do not see how in the circumstances we could press for representation on the Board which even the Foreign Office will not have'. He thought that the question of whether the proposals would work in practice would depend on the 'personalities of the Chairman and the Board and the spirit in which the plan is worked' rather than on the Council's 'paper constitution'. He recommended that the Colonial Office should accept the proposals on a trial basis while reserving the right to demand more formal control over expenditure if the arrangements proved to be unsatisfactory in the future.<sup>73</sup> The Council was given 600,000 pounds for the financial year 1945-6 to operate in Aden, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta, the Mauritius, Palestine the West Indies and West Africa.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, was less sanguine. He thought there was 'no justification for the intrusion of this extraneous body into what should be one of the responsibilities of a Colonial Government'. Nor was he impressed with the work

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<sup>72</sup> White, op.cit., pp.55-6.

<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0859/127/6, minute by Jeffries, 23 March 1945.



of the Council: 'practically nothing of the work of the Council I have seen in the past makes me anxious for its continuance in the future'. However, Stanley was realistic enough not to look a gift horse in the mouth, 'with the British Council, we shall get 600,000 pounds a year: without it I am sure we should be told that we must rely on the 120,000,000 pounds [of Colonial Development and Welfare money] and there would be no additions'. He had come to the conclusion 'that the pill is sufficiently gilded for us to swallow'.<sup>74</sup>

For the time being and before work could begin in Africa, the Colonial Office would have to await the decision of the new post-war government on whether Stewart's other proposals would be accepted and for consideration of Guthrie's report on the future of the British Council activities in East and Central Africa.

#### Developments in Africa

Steps were taken to ensure the faster supply of material to Africa. For example, arrangements were made to supply negatives instead of photographs from the newly established West African Photo Unit to Southern Rhodesia, East Africa and South Africa direct instead of being supplied via London.<sup>75</sup> In addition to the MOI's EMPAX guidance news telegrams a weekly 1000 word telegram would be sent to East and Central Africa which would interpret the war, give background to the war and summarise the war situation.<sup>76</sup>

Propaganda activities in the African colonies increased in quantity and variety in the second half of the war. The Colonial Office had encouraged the local production of propaganda for use both in the colonies themselves and Britain and overseas. The arrival of Sir

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<sup>74</sup> PRO, C0859/127/4, Davidson to Blaxter, 7 June 1945 containing minute by Stanley, 2 February 1945.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, INF1/356, Usill to Evans (MOI in Accra West Africa), 6 February 1943.

<sup>76</sup> PRO, INF1/552, Empire Division directive, undated, mid-1942.

Geoffrey Northcote as the Principal Information Officer in Kenya held out the hope that propaganda activities in East Africa would be given a new sense of direction and impetus. This was important since not all territorial Information Officers in East and Central Africa were full time. The territorial Information Officers continued to communicate directly with the MOI, but it was hoped that Northcote would coordinate activities and encourage cooperation and the interchange of material so that the overlap of activity would be avoided. He would also maintain close contact with military intelligence in East Africa and help prepare material for the East African war effort, for recruiting and propaganda for Italian prisoners of war. Northcote also proposed the establishment of an East African Film Unit to produce films for Africans locally.<sup>77</sup>

London directed Northcote to undertake more 'long-term propaganda' about British colonial policy and its objectives. His views were sought on whether Africans would be interested in propaganda about what the British government had already been able to accomplish in the West Indies and West Africa as a result of the Colonial Development and Welfare legislation since the East African territories would 'no doubt be applying for similar assistance'.<sup>78</sup>

Northcote was criticised for a lack of 'enterprise' by the military authorities in East Africa and by the Governor of Kenya, Sir Henry Moore. Although his activities were considered to have improved to a 'marked degree' by the beginning of 1943, he was continually ill and never left Nairobi. In addition Northcote held the view that all the initiative should come from the territorial Information Officers themselves.<sup>79</sup>

The situation in East Africa was further complicated by renewed discussions between the Colonial Office and the

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<sup>77</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, Northcote to Cameron, 14 August 1942.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, Cameron to Northcote, 11 June 1943.

<sup>79</sup> PRO, C0875/9/18, Sabine to Usill, 15 September 1942; minute by Sabine, 27 February 1943.



MOI about Northcote's terms of reference, which reawakened the old dispute between the MOI and the Colonial Office over MOI encroachments into areas of the Secretary of State for the Colonies responsibility. The MOI proposed that Northcote should be responsible for 'assisting the Information Officers with their local propaganda problems as an agent for distributing Ministry [of Information] guidance and background material'. The Colonial Office, on the other hand, thought that this would be the 'thin end of the wedge' of MOI interference in the direction of propaganda. This would conflict with the Secretary of State for the Colonies's responsibility for all activities in the colonies. Instead the Colonial Office wanted Northcote's terms of reference to remain vague and like the terms of reference for the MOI's representative in West Africa, should be confined to that of 'liaison'.<sup>80</sup>

The East Africa Command recognised the need to address the future and suggested the creation of a Combined Civil and Services Information Bureau. This Bureau would replace Northcote's office of PIO to the East Africa Command and would be responsible both to the military and to the East Africa Governors' Conference in order to 'originate schemes of benefit to East Africa and its soldiers as a whole'. There was a pressing need to counter boredom and maintain morale in the fighting forces. It had been noted that the African askaris had begun to ask questions about demobilisation. There was also a need to counter civilian 'complacency and maintain interest in our war effort'.<sup>81</sup> The East African Governors' Conference agreed to the establishment of a new Bureau in which Northcote would remain as PIO assisted by a deputy, F.R. Stephen, who would be the MOI's representative in East Africa.<sup>82</sup> The Colonial Office and the MOI agreed to East Africa's proposal. The PIO's main function would be to ensure that close liaison

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<sup>80</sup> PRO, CO875/9/18, Huxley to Sabine, 4 May 1943; minute by Morgan, 7 May 1943.

<sup>81</sup> PRO, CO875/9/18, memorandum from the East African Command, May 1943.

<sup>82</sup> PRO, CO875/9/18, EAGC to Colonial Office, 17 June 1943.

existed between the civil and military authorities for a 'consistent policy in propaganda and publicity being directed to African troops on civil matters, particularly in respect of post-war rehabilitation and to maintain efficient contact between the troops and their homes'. The PIO would assume charge of the Propaganda and Information Section of the East African Governors' Conference Secretariat. He would also ensure that the 'comparatively neglected field' of publicity to the United Kingdom would be developed and would be responsible for supervising publicity directed overseas about East Africa.<sup>83</sup>

The close cooperation between the PIO and the military proved to be a double-edged sword. Following a visit to Nairobi in June 1944 the MOI's representative in West Africa, Harold Evans\*, noted: 'the resources of the East Africa Command have made it possible for the Ministry [of Information] to use the Army as agents to an extent not possible in West Africa, but as a result there is a strong military flavour to most of the activities undertaken on the spot'.<sup>84</sup> A major consideration was the lack of finance available to balance the kind of propaganda produced by the East African Command to prepare the African troops for the return to civilian life after the war and a whole range of 'social problems' which were 'being created for which the civilian authorities would be more competent to deal with than the military'. While the PIO could still supply some material for native troops serving in East Africa or overseas the terms of reference precluded the MOI from providing the military with propaganda material. In the final analysis the onus would be on the PIO to persuade the military to produce this kind of material but 'if the military are providing the money they may very well wish to call the tune'.<sup>85</sup>

The East Africa Command eventually recognised the need

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<sup>83</sup> PRO, INF1/553, MOI-Colonial Office meeting to discuss propaganda and publicity in East Africa, 11 August 1943; CO875/9/19, minute by Morgan, 8 December 1943.

<sup>84</sup> PRO, INF1/554, note by Evans, 12 June 1944.

<sup>85</sup> PRO, INF1/554, Us11 to PIO, 7 October 1943.



to address the problems of demobilisation and return to civilian life by creating a new Directorate of Education and Welfare which took over the Army education and Information Services. This had four functions: 1) education, post-war planning liaison and vocational training; 2) broadcasting and mobile home news units; 3) entertainments, films, leave billeting and hostels; and 4) canteens, sports and radio equipment, personal welfare, legal aid and personal enquiries.<sup>86</sup>

The PIO's primary role in East Africa was not as a production organisation but to distribute MOI material to local Information Officers and from the East Africa Command. The PIO did, however, finance and sponsor local propaganda initiatives which were made possible by using the resources and personnel of the East Africa Command which therefore accounted for the 'military' flavour of propaganda produced locally together with the fact that a quarter of a million Africans were serving in the armed forces. For example, the PIO did not control a photographic service but instead supplied the East Africa Command with photographic material in return for the production of photographs by the Command. The PIO also financed and distributed the fortnightly wall sheets produced by the East Africa Command which illustrated the activities of the Command. The PIO supplied the paper for the printing of maps of war fronts produced by the East Africa Command for civilian use. A series of booklets illustrating the work of branches of the East Africa Command were financed by the PIO. Similarly, the PIO sponsored a war correspondent, Gandar Dower, to write about the East African forces who produced The King's African Rifles in Madagascar. The PIO additionally financed the pamphlet about East African troops called Spear of Freedom which had been designed to encourage enlistment and to maintain morale of the Pioneer Corps. African Soldiers at War in Abyssinia, East Africans at War, East African Education Corps, East African Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Motor Military Transport Corps and Military

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<sup>86</sup> PRO, INF1/554, Gurney to Northcote, 4 May 1944.

Mobile Unit were all PIO financed booklets.<sup>87</sup>.

The PIO paid for broadcasts from Nairobi to the troops, consisting of twenty one hours a month of vernacular broadcasts for African troops and eight hours a month for imperial troops. Northcote also financed the Kenya Information Office's weekly broadcasts, 'Guide to the News' and 'East African Newsletter'.<sup>88</sup>

In the area of local film production the PIO supplied stock or part of the cost of the production of films made by the East Africa Command which resulted in the production of seven 16 mm. films and eight 35 mm. films in 1943. These were also distributed to the territorial Information Officers as well as to the MOI.<sup>89</sup> For example, the 35 mm. film, Return of an Emperor about the return of Haile Selassie to Abyssinia, was reproduced onto 16 mm. film and was financed and distributed by the PIO. Other 16 mm. films shot by military cine-photographers included Masai Cattle Sale which depicted Masai tribesmen bringing cattle for the troops partly for sale and partly as gifts, African Pioneers in the Middle East, made in the Middle East and sent to Nairobi for editing and then sent to South Africa to be copied and Major Kingston-Davies' Training of American Lorry Drivers.<sup>90</sup>

Before the war Major Kingston-Davies received Colonial Office support in his previous incarnation as a maker of 16 mm. educational films in East Africa.<sup>91</sup> During the Second World War he received a grant of 150 pounds to make films commissioned by the PIO. Davies toured East Africa, Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to gather material to produce films on three themes Trusteeship,

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<sup>87</sup> PRO, INF1/554, note by Evans, 12 June 1944; C0875/9/20, annual report of the MOI Office, East Africa Command, 13 February 1943.

<sup>88</sup> PRO, INF1/554, note by Evans, 12 June 1944.

<sup>89</sup> PRO, INF1/554, note by Evans, 12 June 1944.

<sup>90</sup> PRO, C0875/9/20, annual report on MOI office East Africa Command, 13 February 1943.

<sup>91</sup> C.f. PRO, C0323/1356/5/file.



Native African Craftsmen Yesterday and Today and East African Export Products. The Trusteeship film would illustrate the administrative systems and social services of the East African colonial governments in 'preparing their native peoples of these colonies for ultimate self-government'. Native African Craftsmen would contrast traditional and modern methods and East African Export Products would show production for war purposes of commodities like sisal, rubber, tin and copper.<sup>92</sup>

A survey of film activities in East Africa was undertaken in June 1944 to discover the requirements of the colonies under the responsibility of the PIO. This was done to facilitate planning for future local developments including the possibility of establishing a central film making unit. It was found that the type of film in greatest need were educational and documentary films 'dealing with all social matters for the general uplift of the African with a limited number for entertainment of a suitable type' and films which portrayed life in the various colonies, showing the 'cultural, social and economic life and development ... in their true light to British, American and European public outside Africa, stressing certain features which the masses are ignorant or ill-informed'. The development of this kind of film was thought to be increasingly important as the war was drawing to an end and which

would leave something in the nature of an anti-climax in the mind of the Africans whether soldiers or not and that the best way of countering this would be the substitution of some new interest such as a liberal supply of cinemas, showing films which really appealed to the African and directed his thoughts to higher ideals, morally, socially and materially.

Moreover, these kind of films would be of value in the promotion of mass education in the colonies in support of the recent policy commitments made by the British government.<sup>93</sup>

Although the Information Officers recognised the need

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<sup>92</sup> PRO, INF1/564, Northcote to Kingston Davies, 21 March 1944.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, INF1/564, report by Champion, 22 June 1944.

to establish new machinery to produce these types of films, few of them were prepared to finance the whole cost of establishing a central unit. It was estimated that the initial capital outlay would be seven thousand pounds with recurrent expenditure of ten thousand pounds per annum. It was hoped that the initial capital outlay and the first few years of current expenditure would be met by a grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare fund.<sup>94</sup>

Implicit in the suggestions for the establishment of a central film unit was criticism of the films produced by the Colonial Film Unit. The report was at pains to remark that some of the films made by the Colonial Film Unit like Mr. English At Home and Royal Review, had been well received by African audiences. It was felt, however, that what in future films shot in an African environment would be required, 'featuring Africans and in scenes and actions which they are familiar' which would be more readily understood and convincing to African audiences.<sup>95</sup>

The majority of Information Officers favoured the production of coloured silent 16 mm. films because they could be used by mobile units and shown to Africans of different languages. Harry Franklin\* in Northern Rhodesia favoured 'talkies' because the Africans in Central Africa, particularly those in the Copperbelt, had become accustomed to 35 mm. 'talkies' and might be discontented with anything less. He also argued that apparatus which would provide the films with sound tracks could also meet the increasing demands of the BBC in London for recordings of native songs. It was argued, however that 35 mm. 'talkies' would be far more expensive to produce and that the conditions in Northern Rhodesia presented particular circumstances of films for mine employees, whereas the majority of Africans in East and Central Africa had 'hardly, if ever seen any type of film'.<sup>96</sup>

It was agreed that it would be necessary to produce

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<sup>94</sup> ibid.

<sup>95</sup> ibid.

<sup>96</sup> ibid.



films to the 35 mm. commercial standard for overseas audiences. These films should be short, four to six minute features, as 'European and American cinema-goers as a body, would be ill-disposed to spend a whole evening viewing films featuring life and activities of the African colonies' unless they were feature films of the Sanders of the River type. And feature films would be beyond the budget of the proposed unit.<sup>97</sup>

It was also hoped that when the cameramen employed by the unit were not engaged in filming that they would be able to devote some time to stills photography. This would lead to the creation of a central photographic library which would be attached to the central film unit. Similarly, it was agreed that it would be advantageous to set up a central laboratory to develop and copy the films made by the unit instead of sending them to South Africa for processing.<sup>98</sup>

In the area of broadcasting there was a concerted effort to coordinate broadcasting in East and Central Africa. The BBC was also anxious to improve its service to Africa. On the Overseas Service there had been more balanced programming between 'talks' and 'entertainment'. There was a move away from 'talks' and features because there was criticism from Africa 'on the ground that there was a disproportionate amount of speech'.<sup>99</sup> There was also a general increase in the number of programmes specially for Allied troops serving overseas. Wickham Steed continued to present 'World Affairs' and Herbert Marshall and Sidney Horniblow presented 'News from Home'; 'Matters of the Moment' continued, but 'War Report' was dropped. 'Wickham Steed remains outstandingly and almost universally popular, and the only speakers who approach him are J.B. Priestley and Howard Marshall'.<sup>100</sup> The African

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<sup>97</sup> ibid.

<sup>98</sup> ibid.

<sup>99</sup> WAC, E2/497, Programmes Overseas, Quarterly Report : Empire Countries and the U.S.A., 17 August 1942.

<sup>100</sup> ibid.

Service broadcast the Home Service series, 'Red on the Map'. The former East African specialist in the Empire Division of the MOI, Herbert Scott, recorded 'News Letters' for the Empire Transcription Service.<sup>101</sup> A new twelve part series was produced especially for the Africa Service called 'Middle of the World' which featured talks by figures like Joyce Cary and Julian Huxley. In September 1943 Lord Lugard and Lord Hailey broadcast on 'the future of Africa and the Africans'. There had been a greater demand for more entertainment and music programmes from both audiences in Africa and the troops serving in North Africa. Accordingly a greater amount of air time was devoted to light music and entertainment with favourites like 'Tommy Handley's Half Hour', the 'Starlight' variety programme featuring stars like Vera Lynn, 'Old Mother Riley', 'Tommy Get Your Gun' featuring Tommy Trinder and an evening of light music and quizzes in the 'Weekly Party at the Overseas League' presented by Joan Gilbert. On Saturday nights there was the special programme 'It's All Yours', which provided a link between troops serving in isolated parts of the world and their families in Britain. There was an increase in the number of programmes in Afrikaans and the entertainment programme, 'Songtime in the Laager', aimed at South African and Southern Rhodesian forces continued. The change of emphasis towards entertainment was confirmed by the incorporation of the General Forces Programme into the General Overseas Service in June 1944.

The BBC was careful in the variety material they broadcast overseas and bore in mind, '1. the needs and susceptibilities of our troops overseas. 2. the interests and susceptibilities of our various special audiences in the Empire and the United States and other foreign countries where they listen to London'. Areas to be avoided were 'any suggestions that their womenfolk might be getting off with someone else particularly with troops from overseas', any 'suggestions that people at home are having

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<sup>101</sup> WAC, E2/497, Overseas Service, Quarterly Report for Empire Counties and the U.S.A., 1 January 1943.



a very gay time and spending a lot of money', 'alarming air-raid stories' and 'too much nostalgic sentiment'. Material dealing with 'colour questions' also needed careful handling. The word 'native' was to be avoided and the word 'nigger' never used. In the use of jokes commonsense and good taste should be observed to avoid 'any cannibal stuff - natives eating white men and women'. Controversial questions in a quiz like '"What do you mean by a white man?" Answer: "An upright, truthful man"' were also to be avoided.<sup>102</sup>

The MOI carried out a listening survey on broadcasting in the colonies based on the responses of the territorial information officers which was intended to help the BBC in its programming on the Overseas Service. The first task was to establish the size of the audience.<sup>103</sup> The results received were as follows:

COLONY	NUMBER WITH ACCESS TO A RADIO	NUMBER HEARING LONDON REGULARLY
Northern Rhodesia	10,000 Europeans 8,000 non-Europeans	10,000 Europeans no non-Europeans
Nyasaland	400 sets, practically all Europeans, many Indians and a few Africans	practically everyone with access
Uganda	480 Europeans 340 non-Europeans	all Europeans and most non-Europeans
Zanzibar	-	probably 100 Europeans and 2,000 non-Europeans hear BBC news by loud-speaker

In general, news presentation was thought satisfactory, but

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<sup>102</sup> WAC, E2/496/2, Cecil Madden's, Policy Directive for Variety material broadcast Overseas, undated.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, C0875/3/9, MOI Questionnaire on Radio Listening in the Colonies: the BBC Empire Service Intelligence Memorandum, the Colonial Audience, 14 January 1942. Also c.f. PRO, C0875/4/17, for the 1938 figures for wireless ownership in Kenya (2995), Uganda (391) and Tanganyika (605).

Northern Rhodesia thought it varied. There was the criticism that there was boring repetition of military successes and that attempts should not be made to conceal reverses. The survey was not very complimentary about musical programmes. As Nyasaland reported, 'too much music hall matter with "comic" pattern which is difficult to catch. Music is often distorted. The tendency is to tune to other stations for music'. Northern Rhodesia commented that musical programmes were only listened to by people in isolated districts. The Information Officers were also asked if they wanted broadcasting in any languages other than English. Nyasaland thought it unnecessary, while Northern Rhodesia favoured Afrikaans, Zanzibar wanted Swahili and Uganda wanted Hindustani.<sup>104</sup> The Colonial Office thought that the results were disappointing, especially as far as entertainment was concerned. Officials questioned the validity of some of the comments and suspected they were the personal opinions of the Information Officers. The Colonial Office looked forward to a time when the BBC could send qualified intelligence officers to the colonies. In the meantime the BBC wished to encourage the establishment of panels of special observers to monitor BBC Empire Service programming.<sup>105</sup> The Colonial Office urged the Information Officers in East Africa to take advantage of the new attitude in the BBC which was less 'fastidious' about its reputation for 'independence' than it had been in the past. Therefore any assistance the Information Officers could provide in helping the BBC in its programming might fall on more receptive ears. The Colonial Office was reluctant to add to the work of the Information Officers by encouraging them to monitor BBC programmes and suggested that the Information Officers could recruit other people to help in

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<sup>104</sup> ibid.

<sup>105</sup> PRO, CO875/3/9, minute by Wilson, 24 January 1942; Davenport (BBC) to Edmett, 21 March 1942.



the task.<sup>106</sup>

As far as local broadcasting in East Africa was concerned, while Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had government-operated radio stations and Kenya was served by the Cable and Wireless station in 7LO Nairobi, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar had no local stations of their own and had to rely on Kenya. The Nairobi station 7LO broadcast a compilation of East African news nightly which was supplied by the East African Standard. The Information Officer in Kenya compiled a weekly East African newsletter based on material sent to him by the Information Officers from the other East African colonies.<sup>107</sup> 7LO broadcast in English, Hindustani and ten African languages, Swahili, Kikuyu, Dholuo, Kikamba, Kavirondo, Nandi, Luganda, Chinyanja, Kisii and Acholi. In a meeting of East African Information Officers in September 1943 plans were discussed for the development of territorial stations to be established in colonies not already engaged in local broadcasting. It was concluded that in order to minimise the expense of each colony developing a broadcasting system of their own, the best development would be to establish a central East African broadcasting station and this would be further developed after the war. In the meantime, the Information Officers wished to invite a technical expert from the BBC to visit the region and report on the future of broadcasting in East Africa.<sup>108</sup>

The BBC's East Africa correspondent was the editor of the East African Standard, George Kinnear, who sent the BBC a good deal of information. Northcote, the PIO, wanted the BBC to institute a weekly East African newscast. Grenfell Williams of the BBC's Overseas Service was delighted with the 'rising interest in broadcasting' shown by East Africa

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<sup>106</sup> PRO, C0875/3/9, Colonial Office to information officers in East Africa, 27 June 1942.

<sup>107</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, minute by Keating, 15 February 1944; Northcote to Wathen, 12 November 1943.

<sup>108</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, extract from the proceedings of the East Africa Information Officers conference, Nairobi, 27 September 1943.

and promised full BBC cooperation. The BBC also hoped to ensure that more East African material could be broadcast on the Home Service. Although the Home Service schedule was 'tight', Williams had little doubt that 'good material' would 'find a market'.<sup>109</sup>

At the end of 1943 the BBC introduced a fortnightly programme on the Overseas Service called 'Calling East Africa' in addition to 'Calling South Africa' and 'Calling Southern Rhodesia'. 'Calling East Africa' was not altogether a success. It was criticised by the Information Officer in Tanganyika for being too Kenya-centric.<sup>110</sup> The BBC thought that there were inherent problems in this kind of programming as it merely recast East African news back to East Africa.<sup>111</sup> Instead the BBC favoured the development of local broadcasting in East Africa. The first priority would be to achieve an improvement in listening facilities in East Africa.<sup>112</sup> While it was recognised that it was difficult to estimate the exact audience because of communal listening facilities, it was clear that the figures were not 'very imposing'. The Colonial Office thought that, while all should be done to improve regional cooperation in broadcasting, the main priority was to encourage the supply of radio sets for communal purposes. While the war was still being fought, and finance for such ambitious schemes was limited, it was

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<sup>109</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, Northcote to Wathen, 12 November 1943; Grenfell Williams to Latham, 16 December 1943.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, Tanganyika to Colonial Office, 9 December 1943.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, minute by Morgan, 11 February 1944 on a meeting of Usill, Latham and Grenfell Williams, 5 January 1944.

<sup>112</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, minute by Keating, 15 February 1944.

The number of wireless sets in East Africa in 1944 were as follows:

Kenya	6,377
Tanganyika	2,000
Uganda	820
Zanzibar	100
Nyasaland	400
Northern Rhodesia	21,000 (estimated total).



recognised that little could be done in this area until the return to peacetime conditions.<sup>113</sup>

The Information Office in Kenya had been criticised by Ferdinand Joelson the editor of East Africa and Rhodesia, for failing to send material to Britain for publication in the British press.<sup>114</sup> The Colonial Office was similarly disappointed with news received from Kenya as only 'a small percentage of material received is of sufficiently high standard for the National newspapers'. In any case Kenya was 'fairly well covered' by correspondents of the national newspapers, but because a small number of them had a 'virtual monopoly' of the news, little effort was made to do feature work. One explanation for this lack of interest in feature work was thought to be an 'exaggerated fear' of cabling stories which might 'offend against security'.<sup>115</sup>

In order to improve the supply of news to Kenya the Colonial Office negotiated with Reuters to establish a cable service. Reuters attached 'greater importance to getting their news into Kenya than into any other Dependency'. The Colonial Office encouraged the Kenyan government and the East African Standard to share the cost of the transmission of news. As Reuters showed increased interest in colonial news and in appointing correspondents in the colonies, colonial governments were encouraged to accommodate Reuters. The colonial governors were reminded that it would be of advantage to support Reuters not only during wartime but also for post-war when it would be important for the British press to have accurate information about the British empire and Commonwealth.<sup>116</sup>

The Information Officer in Kenya, Eric Davies, was generally pleased with the material received from London. Northcote ensured that this material was passed on to the military whose supplies of material from Britain had not

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<sup>113</sup> PRO, C0875/2/15, minute by Keating, 15 February 1944.

<sup>114</sup> PRO, C0875/13/17, minute by Halder, 7 September 1942.

<sup>115</sup> PRO, C0875/18/1, minute by Halder, 24 June 1943.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, C0875/4/30, minute by Watherston, 4 October 1943; circular despatch, 3 January 1944.

been as regular. Northcote also ensured that material sent to Kenya, like daily Empax commentaries and 'Veritas' was passed on to the territorial Information officers in East and Central Africa. The books, pamphlets, posters and maps sent from London were useful, but postcards were not needed and the posters were generally 'too complicated for the African to appreciate'. More posters of the 'Together' kind would be suitable as it had a simple message depicting men from various parts of the empire 'marching together'. The Information Office could use any posters of the Royal Family which continued to have 'unlimited appeal'. The Office had engaged the services of a Rhodesian soldier who helped in the broadcasts of Radio Nairobi and edited the well-received, 'Kenya Information Office Fortnightly', a four page broadsheet sent to 2,000 farmers, District Commissioners and Agricultural officers containing 'farming notices and orders and instructions on whatever subject appears most pressing at the time'.<sup>117</sup> A weekly newsletter in Afrikaans was produced by the Kenyan Information Office. The Office's Indian section produced a weekly Gujarati and Urdu newsheet. There was increasing awareness of the need to address the problem of propaganda to African communities and at the end of 1943 a new African section was added to the Information Office. To cater for the African community a weekly Swahili newsletter, Pamoja, was produced by the African section.<sup>118</sup>

European opinion in Kenya, however thought that the civilian war effort, particularly in the area of production, was inadequate. Blame was laid on the government of Kenya about food shortages for labour. These problems had been partially addressed by a three day production conference in March 1943 attended by farmers on regional production committees which helped to 'clear the air' and boosted the resolve to increase production.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> PRO, CO875/6/17, Davies to Sabine, 28 April 1943.

<sup>118</sup> PRO, INF1/554, report by Evans, 12 June 1944; INF1/564, Davies to Gurney, 8 March 1944.

<sup>119</sup> PRO, CO875/6/17, Davies to Sabine, 28 April 1943.



Davies was also anxious to conduct publicity for overseas consumption on behalf Kenya, in particular, what the colony was 'doing for the Africans'. In order to address criticism of British colonial policy Davies arranged for the production of illustrated articles on subjects like 'African Administration in Nairobi', 'Medical Activities in the Reserves', 'African Schools', 'Better African Health and Housing in Kenya' to be sent to London.<sup>120</sup>

Public opinion in the East and Central African colonies among the European populations was thought to have remained generally constant. In Nyasaland the Information Officer, Wisdom, reported public opinion followed closely 'what one hears of the trend of public opinion in Britain'. Excited rumours resulted from the setbacks in the position in South-East Asia but, as the situation stabilised and with news of the Allied offensive, 'a much calmer and more confident atmosphere' was apparent. There was now a worrying tendency towards 'over-optimism'.<sup>121</sup> In Northern Rhodesia, where the Europeans were confident of eventual victory, the focus of their grumbles was the machinery of government and not the government itself. The Europeans employed in the Copperbelt mines were more busy with work than thinking about their individual contributions to the war effort. Growing criticism of the BBC's Overseas Service was evident. Europeans questioned whether they were being told the 'truth' about the war and whether disasters were being 'glossed over'. The suggestion that the fall of Tobruk was a 'blessing in disguise' was 'exasperating'.<sup>122</sup>

The African population of Nyasaland was on the whole more interested in the 'daily business of living' while the more educated were influenced by the European

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<sup>120</sup> ibid.

<sup>121</sup> PRO, CO875/1/16, report of the Information Officer in Nyasaland, January 1942.

<sup>122</sup> PRO, CO875/7/2, Report on public opinion in Northern Rhodesia, July 1942.

population.<sup>123</sup> In Northern Rhodesia the picture of African opinion was mixed. In rural areas the African 'understands the war but little' although he was confident that 'Britain will win as they always do'. It appeared that the message about the nature of the German threat to the Africans had filtered through as they were conscious of the German view of black people being a 'most inferior race'. But the rural African was more preoccupied with the desire to 'secure peace and quiet, food and drink'. Educated African opinion divided into two groups. Educated and loyal Africans understood the war, tolerated deprivations and disturbances to their lives, believing that British rule was 'better than any other' and would stand by Britain if war came to Northern Rhodesia. The criticisms of educated but not so loyal Africans were growing. They did not think that the war was any of their concern, had little desire to contribute, would not help if war came to Northern Rhodesia and had purely local interests of improving their own conditions of life. They were especially audible in the Copperbelt and urban areas where they saw the colour bar in practice.<sup>124</sup>

The activities of the Nyasaland Information Office were praised for making the transition from purely war propaganda to a 'more effective public service' and in particular directed towards the Forces and maintaining contacts between them and their homes.<sup>125</sup> The Nyasaland Information Office produced several newsletters for the African populations. Nkhani za Nyasaland in Nyanja had a distribution of 11,000 copies a week and Makani gha Nyasaland in Tumbuka had a 2,000 a week distribution. These combined both war news and local matters in the hope that 'whatever new call may be made upon them they will be prepared'. A newsletter for Nyasaland troops had a

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<sup>123</sup> PRO, CO875/7/16, report of the Information Officer in Nyasaland, January 1942.

<sup>124</sup> PRO, CO875/7/12, report on public opinion in Northern Rhodesia, July 1942.

<sup>125</sup> PRO, CO875/7/16, minute by Edmett, 4 June 1942; minute by Morgan, 5 November 1943.



circulation of 600. It included family messages and local African issues and from November 1942 a free letter service from families to troops was instituted.<sup>126</sup> The Information Office complained that it received too many MOI press telegrams and British press articles that repeated much of what was already heard on the BBC or read in South African or Southern Rhodesian newspapers. Articles supplied by the Kenyan Information Office, however, were used because they were 'fresh' and had 'considerable local interest'. The English newspaper, the Nyasaland Times, continued to be fully cooperative. Their leader articles were often 'inspired' by Information Office material and the MOI's London Letter appeared in a series 'Sidelights on the War'. Although the paper was loyal in so far as it supported the British war effort, undercurrents of political dissatisfaction were apparent; 'the indignant correspondent still secures a certain amount of space', criticising the Nyasaland government over issues like colonial administration and development policy and petrol rationing.<sup>127</sup>

Comedies continued to be popular with African audiences in Nyasaland where Colonial Film Unit films like An African Sees London and This is a Barrage Balloon were popular especially in schools. Target for Tonight had been shown to enthusiastic audiences. Films were also received from Nairobi, like the film about Abyssinia, Return of an Emperor and the East African Newsreels. The newsreel, British News, was the 'highlight in local cinema programmes'. Cinema programmes were successful in providing an hour's entertainment 'without a single dull moment'.<sup>128</sup>

Cooperation with the PIO in Nairobi also improved.

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<sup>126</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, report by the Information Officer for January 1942, April 1942 and September-December 1942.

<sup>127</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, report by the Information officer in Nyasaland, May-August 1942.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, reports of the Information Officer for Nyasaland, January 1942, April -June 1943, July -September 1943.

The PIO sent Nyasaland wall maps and more news about Nyasaland appeared in the African troop newspaper, Askari. The Colonial Office had complained about the 'death-like silence' which hung over Nyasaland following requests for material which could be publicised from London. Wisdom explained that he had wanted to send more material to Britain for use at home and overseas but was hampered by the lack of time and skill. Nyasaland did not seem to have 'the amateur or semi-professional writer as is to be found in larger territories like Kenya' and he had asked that the PIO send a professional journalist to cover Nyasaland.<sup>129</sup> Each week the Information Officer sent local news in Nyasaland collected by the District Commissioners to be used in newspapers and Radio Nairobi. Nyasaland did not have a local broadcasting station of its own but the BBC could be heard around the clock.<sup>130</sup>

#### The East Africa Command's Mobile Propaganda Unit

A Mobile Propaganda Unit was attached to the East Africa Command and toured East and Central Africa during the war and again added to the military flavour of official propaganda in East Africa. The Unit was led by Major Dickson, a former foreign correspondent with the Daily Telegraph and consisted of one other European officer and 28 African askaris from 19 units, 20 tribes and 7 territories.<sup>131</sup> The Unit mounted film shows, P.T., mortar and small gun displays in order to show life in the army and to bring the war to Africans in their own locality.<sup>132</sup>

Writing about the Unit in 1945, Dickson was adamant that the aim of this 'mobile edition of the Aldershot

<sup>129</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, report from the Information Officer in Nyasaland, July -September 1943 and C0875/18/1, minute by Haler, 24 June 1943.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, report by the Information Officer in Nyasaland for January-March 1943 and April 1942.

<sup>131</sup> Captain A.G. Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation: the Mobile Propaganda Unit, East Africa Command', African Affairs, 44:174, 1945, p.10.

<sup>132</sup> PRO, C0875/8/8, Dickson's report, March 1943.



Tattoo' was not to obtain African recruits. Instead, its aims were fivefold. First, it aimed to 'show the life and training of the askari'. Second, to 'demonstrate modern weapons and equipment'. Third, to 'explain news of the war and its significance to Africans'. Fourth, to 'stimulate greater interest in their relatives in the Army' and fifth, 'to encourage an intensified war effort by the civilian population'.<sup>133</sup> The main task, as Dickson saw it, was not to increase the number of African recruits but to live down the tradition of 'brutal, licentious soldiery'. In this respect Dickson thought that the Unit's 'safaris' had some value in dispelling rumours about army life and also inculcated the feeling that 'this war is one of all the tribes of East Africa'. The Unit was aided in this task by employing African askaris in their displays as Africans were far more likely to believe what another African had told them. In this way it was not the displays themselves which were of the greatest benefit but rather the opportunity for Africans to speak to members of the African fighting forces in a direct and personal way.<sup>134</sup>

As Dickson later explained his men were 'missionaries'. Their job as public relations men meant they were on duty all the time. For example, Corporal Leo 'gave up our one free afternoon in the Copper Belt to drill the Chingola police'. When the Unit had a free evening they attended parties given in their honour 'with set speeches and exchanges of view'. Attention was even paid to the kind of impression they left after a visit. Sergeant Allen 'wrote letters of thanks to every school, boma<sup>135</sup>, or individual from whom we received outstanding hospitality—that is to say, nearly everyone'.<sup>136</sup>

Dickson was right in identifying the army's 'public

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<sup>133</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation ...', p.10.

<sup>134</sup> PRO, C0875/8/8, Dickson's report, March 1943.

<sup>135</sup> A boma was the Swahili for district or divisional government headquarters.

<sup>136</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in Wart-time Organisation ...', p.11.

relations' problem, in view of the bad experience of Africans who had fought in the First World War and their treatment in the 'carrier corps'. As we saw in chapter two this was a sensitive issue and the BBC promised to omit any reference to the carrier corps in their broadcasts. But while Dickson was self-congratulatory about the laudable motives his Unit had and declared the aim was not to increase the number of recruits, he himself was forced to admit that as a result of the displays 'some thousands' of Africans 'begged to be allowed to join the Army'.<sup>137</sup>

In 1942 94,000 Tanganyikans had seen its displays. Dickson's report of the Unit's 'safari' in Uganda reveals much about the Unit's activities and also provides an individual appreciation of Britain's propaganda effort among African populations. In 109 days the Unit covered 4,800 miles, held 74 displays for African audiences and 3 for European audiences and reached a total audience of 154,000 people.<sup>138</sup>

Dickson gave a vivid, if paternalistic account of the reception he received in the communities the Unit visited in Uganda. He recounted the response of an African chief following a mortar bomb display. A bomb landed nearer to a plantation than had been intended which led the chief to exclaim, 'If anyone has been killed, its been well worth it! I'll pay the blood money myself!' He also recalled how a District Commissioner and the Inspector of police headed a 'sprint' of 500 naked Karamojong across a ravine to get souvenir splinters of the mortar bomb. He recounted how 'the appearance and accomplishment of the eleven year bugler from Jinja amazed Africans to such extent it was thought that he must be an adult dwarf ... We could with ease, have recruited a battalion of them!'.<sup>139</sup> The Unit received over 200 letters and essays about the displays in which the word 'gentle' ran like a 'refrain, a quality not generally connected with soldiering, and not always linked

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<sup>137</sup> ibid.

<sup>138</sup> PRO, C0875/8/8, Dickson's report, March 1943.

<sup>139</sup> ibid.



with the word "gentleman". This gentle and personal touch combined with the 'force of example' would, in Dickson's opinion, 'for many years in Africa outweigh the influence of papers, posters, wireless, and the cinema'.<sup>140</sup> Although the African audiences probably only retained about 10% of propaganda points, they went home with the impression that 'life in the army is good, that all can help and that the war is not yet won'.<sup>141</sup>

However, the numbers of people attending the Unit's displays and the anecdotes of the successes of the Unit did not tell the whole story. It was also obvious that the Unit had only added to the problems confronting the British authorities in Uganda, which were in places acute. As much as Dickson tried to demonstrate the enthusiasm which greeted his Unit, the facts spoke a different truth. Dickson said himself that he did not want to imply it had been a triumphal tour of Uganda. Not every Colonial Service officer was pleased to see the military. The arrival of the Unit was not seen as a 'gift from Providence' as it threatened the relationship the District Commissioners had built up with the local populations. The Unit was unable to proceed with a display at King's College in Budo following an incident a few days before the coronation of the Kakaba of Buganda in which the Kabaka's portrait had been torn down resulting in the troops being called in from Kampala and the closure of the school. This disloyalty and undiscipline was particularly worrying as the demonstrators represented the 'elite of the youth of Uganda'. Similarly the Unit met a hostile reception in Luguzi following the murder of a government entomologist and the sentencing to death of eleven Ugandans fuelled by the fear that European cannibals existed on the evidence of the 'Red Hand' bully beef brand believed to contain human meat. The African population feared that the Unit had been sent as a 'press ganging ruse to disguise a show of force by the government'. Dickson was also concerned about the

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<sup>140</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation ...', p.11.

<sup>141</sup> ibid.

way Administrative Officers urged the Unit to 'fire our weapons so that Africans might appreciate the futility of arguing with Bren guns'.<sup>142</sup>

Dickson tried to minimise the seriousness of the situation in Uganda by blaming the lack of a full understanding among the colonial population about the war and British administration. The real problem, according to Dickson, was not so much 'imminent violence' as 'chronic apathy', or not so much 'ignorance of the war so much as failure to appreciate how far the war affects them'. In face of this 'negative luke-warmness' it was far harder for the Unit's propaganda to combat than 'avowed hostility'. The Ugandans also expressed a distaste for the 'virile side of military life', had a contempt for manual labour and preferred technical units. As a Native Authority Treasurer told Dickson in Uganda where the colonial population was among the most educated in Africa, the Unit's propaganda 'like religion, must be destined for the less enlightened tribes'. The same Bugandans who had been described by Lord Lugard in his Dual Mandate as loyal were now only attracted to the army by the 'lure of high wages and technical corps'. Dickson felt that some of the blame lay with the British themselves as 'the Dual Mandate must in operation, mean a dual loyalty - and when was that ever known to work?'.<sup>143</sup> It did not seem to occur to Dickson that the most simple explanation could have been that Ugandans merely disliked the idea of joining the army.

Dickson was not altogether complimentary about the propaganda effort in Uganda and questioned the appropriateness of material used. In regard to a MOI poster, he wrote, '"in addition to producing 90% of the world's nickel, Canada supplies - bushels of wheat etc" (in English) - nothing need be said'. MOI films also came under attack by Dickson who wanted to see the local production of more suitable films.<sup>144</sup> He was equally

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<sup>142</sup> ibid.

<sup>143</sup> ibid.

<sup>144</sup> PRO, C0875/8/8, Dickson's report, March 1943.



critical of colonial government attitudes towards propaganda who regarded it as 'something essentially "common", undignified, and "not in keeping with the best tradition of the service"'. Moreover propagandists themselves were seen either as 'self-advertising hustlers' or as 'the unhappy local reporter, "almost a gentleman", in his drab Burberry collecting the names of mourners at the church-gate for inclusion in to-morrow's paper'.<sup>145</sup>

However as a possible augury for the future the displays were significant in demonstrating that Europeans and Africans could work together. Dickson emphasised the view of the Acting manager of the Roan Antelope Mine on the Copper Belt, where the memories of the bloodshed during the 1940 strike were still strong:

'I can't say that black and white relations are particularly good at the moment - they're not. But in all the years I have been out here, I've never felt a wave of appreciation and sympathy go through a European crowd, as I did at your Show yesterday, for what the Africans are doing in the war'.

Following a visit by the Unit schoolchildren were given the essay title: 'Does the war really affect Africans?' One student's essay was encouraging: 'Now we Africans know that the Europeans (particularly the British), do not make us different from them but regard us as fellow workers in a common cause'.<sup>146</sup>

Indeed, argued Dickson, the future presented great opportunities. Dickson cited two comments from people who had been present at the Unit's displays. The first was a student at the Jeannes School<sup>147</sup> in Northern Rhodesia, Emman Mhango, whose father had been deported from South Africa for alleged sedition for attempting to establish a Native Trade Union. Mhango echoed the theme of winning the peace as there were wars not yet won:

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<sup>145</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation ...', p.17.

<sup>146</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation...', p.13.

<sup>147</sup> Jeannes Schools were named after the founder of a series of community colleges for adult education in the southern United States. In its African form the Jeannes schools were training centres for married teachers and their wives.

Although this present war may be won ... our men will still be engaged in another war - the war of ignorance and superstition. With the knowledge they have acquired from the Army and from peoples of different races, they will try hard to make Africa a place really worth living in.

The second was the comments of the District Commissioner at Petauke, who hoped that the cooperation to fight the war would be continued into the post-war period: 'it is seldom that the arts of war and the arts of peace can have a common aim, but the Propaganda Unit has shown how a spear for freedom may easily be beaten into a ploughshare ... Its emphasis, now on the destruction of the Axis, may later be on the reconstruction of the African'.<sup>148</sup>

As far as the PIO in East Africa was concerned, the Unit was a 'great success'. The principal achievement was that the colonial peoples had been shown the part 'East Africans are playing in the war and their potentialities in the way of civilian activities'.<sup>149</sup> In July and August 1943 Major Dickson's East Africa Command Mobile Propaganda Unit had toured Nyasaland with audiences reaching over 7,000. The Information Officer in Nyasaland agreed with the PIO that Dickson's Unit was 'a complete success'. By explaining to the people 'what their men folk in the Army are doing' the displays 'greatly stimulated interest in the war effort'.<sup>150</sup>

In the Colonial Office some felt Dickson's report was the work 'of an intelligent and penetrating observer' and hoped that the apparent 'diseases of apathy, inertia and unjustifiable conceit' would not be allowed to 'extend indefinitely'. The Colonial Office urged the MOI to take up the criticism of MOI films and point out to Dickson that eleven Colonial Film Unit films had been despatched to Uganda since February 1943. But William Morgan, administrative officer on temporary secondment to the Public Relations Department from the Malayan Education

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<sup>148</sup> Dickson, 'Studies in War-time Organisation ...', p.18.

<sup>149</sup> PRO, INF1/554, Northcote to Wathen, 17 April 1945.

<sup>150</sup> PRO, C0875/7/16, report by the Information Officer of Nyasaland for July-September 1943.



Department was more perceptive: 'reading between the lines one gathers that it was not altogether a success or particularly welcomed'.<sup>151</sup>

A Model Public Relations Office:  
the Case of Northern Rhodesia

The Colonial Office regarded the Information Office in Northern Rhodesia as 'one of the best information set ups in the colonies'.<sup>152</sup> Under the guidance of the Information Officer, Harry Franklin, the activities of the Northern Rhodesian Information Office expanded in the second part of the war. Harry Franklin, later famous for the introduction of the 'Saucepan Special' wireless receiving set<sup>153</sup> had served in Northern Rhodesia during all his Colonial Service career, first as a Native Education Inspector and then in the Judicial Department. He had little experience in propaganda but had been a former editor of Mutende, the official government publication for Africans. In the first part of the war he had been Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs in the Secretariat in Lusaka. Throughout his long career first as the Information Officer and then as the post-war Director of Information, Franklin was dedicated to the interests of the African. In 1950 he decided to resign when it appeared that the Federation in Central Africa was becoming a reality. Federation, he thought, would spell the end of the policy of the paramountcy of African interests, and that policy had been 'the only policy under

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<sup>151</sup> PRO, C0875/8/8, minute by Lieutenant-Colonel Rolleston, 3 June 1943; Morgan to Wathen, 30 June 1943; minute by Morgan, 29 May 1943.

<sup>152</sup> PRO, C0875/7/14, Morgan to Elspeth Huxley, 11 June 1943.

<sup>153</sup> In the days before the transistor radio when wireless sets were very expensive and therefore of prohibitive expense for the African, Franklin managed to persuade Ever Ready to produce cheap sets, suitable for tropical climates which used saucepans as their outside coverings. The result was a mini-communications revolution. C.f. Harry Franklin, The Flag-Wagger (London, 1974), chapter 14.

which I felt I could work'.<sup>154</sup>

This man of principle was a maverick and was no stranger to controversy. In 1938 he incurred the wrath of the Governor (Sir John Maybin) when he wrote a 'vicious attack on Hitler' for Mutende. He was reprimanded, with the Governor arguing that to print would probably earn him the sack as it 'ran counter to HMG's diplomacy at the time and a copy of the paper always went to the Colonial Office'. Although the article did not appear, Franklin was unrepentant as he thought the Governor's arguments were 'irrelevant' unless Hitler also received a copy and Hitler was not on Franklin's 'distribution list'.<sup>155</sup>

Franklin constantly faced the opposition of the European settler politicians to any of his innovations in the information services. They 'did not like the idea' of his Press Section as part of the work of the Information Department and they were in total opposition to the idea of special broadcasts for the Africans, as the Africans would listen and 'get wrong ideas into their heads'.<sup>156</sup>

Franklin was fortunate in having the full support of the Governor, Sir John Waddington, until the latter's retirement in 1947. In a description which could have been about himself, Franklin felt Waddington 'knew where his duty lay, in the uplifting of the African people, and his inclination ran with his duty'. According to Franklin, Waddington had to 'conceal his distaste for politicians and his dislike for the leaders of the white Trade Unions of the copper mines'. Franklin recounted a story (which is impossible to substantiate, but gives an excellent flavour of the political situation within which both the administration and the Information Office tried to operate) of Waddington's skill in dealing with the leader of one of the mineworkers' unions who had threatened to strike which would have endangered the supply of the vital war material copper. Vain, illogical and difficult to reason with, the

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<sup>154</sup> ibid., p.200.

<sup>155</sup> ibid., p.141.

<sup>156</sup> ibid., pp.171 and 173.



union leader had a passion for music and had formed his own miners' brass band:

'We'll have a garden party and bring him and his band down to Government house instead of using the Regimental Band,' the Governor said to me. I ventured to doubt whether that would help reason to prevail.

'We'll see,' said the Governor, chuckling.

It was a splendid garden party. The Governor, a music-lover, endured the band with amiable fortitude and praised it lavishly in a little speech thanking it for its appearance. The bandsmen were very pleased, the Trade Union leader was almost overcome with delight and led the band through the town from the railway station when it arrived back on the Copperbelt. He then declared the strike off.<sup>157</sup>

In these difficult circumstances Franklin had a record of great achievement. In the second part of the war he brought about a huge expansion in propaganda activities in Northern Rhodesia. He emphasised the local production of propaganda material because material produced in Britain was done by individuals who lacked 'local knowledge'. The Information Office produced material designed to 'keep the African alive to the realities of war' in order to maximise the African war effort which was a difficult task in view of the African inclination towards apathy. In addition to Mutende, material regularly produced included a weekly pamphlet of local news for the African troops, Mau a Asikari. The BBC's Overseas Service was supplemented by Radio Lusaka a local government-run broadcasting station which broadcast three times a week in three official languages and in English. Films were shown using a cinema van purchased from South Africa.<sup>158</sup>

Franklin ensured Northern Rhodesian troops were well catered for. He himself visited the fronts and wrote about the troops when northern Rhodesians were in action and he established a Troops' Welfare Service which ensured that relations with the military were 'excellent'. The European officers and NCOs had developed the habit of calling into the Information Office when they were on leave and gave news from Northern Rhodesians serving abroad and their

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<sup>157</sup> ibid., pp.173-4.

<sup>158</sup> PRO, C0875/7/14, Franklin's report, 4 September 1942.

'views on post-war problems. The Information Office also cooperated with the military by raising funds and by distributing 'comforts for the troops from the territory.<sup>159</sup>

The European population was served by a weekly broadcast with the aim of 'trying to keep them on their toes'. Weekly Newsletters in Afrikaans and English were issued. Posters and cinema slides were produced by a local artist, and were intentionally 'low-brow' to suit the 'tough Copperbelt population'.<sup>160</sup>

Franklin also expanded his activities to embrace 'public relations'. He believed that in addition to encouraging the war effort, it was the task of the Information Office to 'popularize the Government by informing the people about what it was doing and how and why it was doing it'.<sup>161</sup> His 'public relations' work entailed extensive travel and attending meetings and informal gatherings and obtaining information about the state of public opinion at first hand. He was somewhat hesitant about this as he did not wish to usurp the activities of the Provincial Commissioners. Nevertheless, Franklin felt 'public relations' was important in maintaining

a liaison between the Public and the Government and the keeping of a finger on the pulse of the public, both African and European, so as to be in a position to report to Government the people's criticisms, reaction to existing and contemplated measures, and so on.

In this activity Franklin hoped to be as flexible as possible:

mixing with miners in pubs is a somewhat delicate operation, but this is a very democratic Colony and, and that sort of thing is not without value - though not of course as a whole time occupation.

Franklin also engaged in 'public relations' activities with the South African and Southern Rhodesian press as the local

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<sup>159</sup> ibid., pp.152-3 and PRO, INF1/354, Wathen to Northcote, 5 April 1945.

<sup>160</sup> ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Franklin, op.cit., p.165.



Northern Rhodesian press did not 'carry a lot of weight'.<sup>162</sup> He made personal contact with the editor and staff of the Bulawayo Chronicle and the chiefs of the Argus Newspaper group in Pretoria and the South African Press Association, giving them a good deal of background information about Northern Rhodesian conditions. Franklin was particularly satisfied with the results of his contacts with the Bulawayo Chronicle which led to the paper 'presenting the affairs of this country in a more reasonable light and in refraining from publishing a good deal of rubbish from irresponsible sources'. His intention, he assured the Colonial Office, was not to 'muzzle the press' as they were all reasonable people who:

when they have an understanding of local affairs they treat them with understanding. We send them as much information, both for publication and as background - not for publication - as we possibly can, and this is growing as Government Officials, brought up in a tradition of silence, are gradually learning not to be afraid to trust me with news of their work.<sup>163</sup>

Franklin's future work looked towards expanding the 'public relations' aspect of the Information Office, building a modern radio studio and installing three transmitters.<sup>164</sup>

Sabine was particularly pleased with Franklin's activities and the start he had made in the 'public relations' field which would assume an even greater role

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<sup>162</sup> ibid; a Colonial Office survey of the colonial press did not recommend local Northern Rhodesian press, the independent Northern Rhodesia Advertiser and the Livingstone Mail, which on the one hand published a high percentage of MOI material, nevertheless adopted an 'unfailingly critical' tone in its editorials against the British government. The Southern Rhodesian Bulawayo Chronicle was commended for being 'second only to the East African Standard in British East Africa, with a high standard of journalism, c.f., PRO, CO875/16/15, survey of the colonial press, February 1943.

<sup>163</sup> PRO, CO875/7/14, Franklin's report, 4 September 1942.

<sup>164</sup> ibid.

postwar.<sup>165</sup> Indeed, Franklin's terms of reference were officially extended and he became the first Public Relations Officer in East Africa.<sup>166</sup> The PIO, however, was a little more cautious about the development of 'public relations' in Northern Rhodesia. In Northcote's view, efforts should be concentrated in future on 'outward' public relations by publicising Africa to the 'outside world' and to explain or 'popularise Government's policy' in East Africa itself rather than 'inward' activities. Although Northcote agreed that a Public Relations Officer 'should do what an to keep the Government appraised of public opinion' he did not regard that as a 'major function' as this was more the administrative responsibility of the District Officers.<sup>167</sup>

During 1943 the staff of the Northern Rhodesian Information Office increased to an assistant information officer, a cinema photographer and four clerks. The broadcasting activities of Radio Lusaka increased during 1943 although there had been difficulties in obtaining the three transmitters. There were also problems with radio reception. While morning reception was good there were problems with evening reception in some areas. An extra programme was broadcast on Thursday evenings to 'assist in driving home various campaigns, Salvage Campaign, Savings Campaign, etc.' There was also a new departure in special programmes for special days like Empire Day and St. George's Day featuring amateur talent. Because the public was tired of hearing the same voices, different voices were heard, of government officials and 'private individuals with interesting experiences (escaping from the Far East, for example)', soldiers who had been through Dunkirk, messages from African chiefs, African choirs and lessons in English. Records were difficult to obtain therefore the Information Office had begun to make its own for African

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<sup>165</sup> PRO, C0875/7/14, Sabine to Franklin, 19 November 1942. Sabine also reassured Franklin that he had not underestimated the value of mixing with miners in pubs.

<sup>166</sup> PRO, C0875/7/14, Usill to Sabine, 17 June 1943.

<sup>167</sup> PRO, INF1/554, Northcote to Franklin, 4 May 1944.



broadcasts. Recordings of the governor of Northern Rhodesia were made and broadcast from Lusaka, Luanshya and Nairobi and listened to as far a field as Madagascar and Ceylon. The governor's Christmas message to African troops was greatly appreciated and Franklin frequently heard the comment that 'this was the first time we really felt that Northern Rhodesia was remembering us'.<sup>168</sup> In order to increase the number of African listeners, the government of Northern Rhodesia approved the establishment of a grant of 5 shillings a month to Europeans in rural areas who allow Africans to listen to Lusaka broadcasts and to keep their radio batteries charged.<sup>169</sup>

Relations with the press continued to be good in Northern Rhodesia. On average twenty four communiques were issued a month going to twelve organisations and press agencies and to three new ones, Africa World, the United States Office of War Information and to the new Northern Rhodesian newspaper the Northern News.<sup>170</sup> The circulation of the English newsletter increased from 3,000 to 3,500 a month. People even began to complain that they were unable to obtain the newsletter so it was decided to send one to every European household in Northern Rhodesia and 6,300 were distributed. The Office began producing a monthly newsletter for European Servicemen which was 'more enthusiastically received than anything else published by the Department'. 500 copies were distributed world-wide giving local news in an informal style as well as sports, social and official news.<sup>171</sup>

The circulation of the African paper, Mutende, increased since 1943 from 11,940 to 14,133 copies and was also sent to North Rhodesian Africans living in neighboring territories and South Africa. Local news content increased as did news and pictures from askaris abroad. The African staff of the Mutende office also expanded their activities

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<sup>168</sup> ibid.

<sup>169</sup> ibid.

<sup>170</sup> ibid.

<sup>171</sup> ibid.

to include translating and broadcasting on Lusaka radio and the preparation of war news and local news for the African broadcasts. For Northern Rhodesian askaris a free letter scheme was introduced for the troops and their relatives at home.<sup>172</sup>

The Northern Rhodesian Information Office produced its own pamphlets in the local vernaculars, with a picture pamphlet every two or three months. Subjects included 'Grow more Food' and the illustration of the work of Northern Rhodesian troops abroad.<sup>173</sup> Unfortunately, the pamphlet African Advance, considered by the Colonial Office to have excellent pictures and a 'good "partnership" story' was too Northern Rhodesian specific to merit publication as a MOI booklet.<sup>174</sup>

The local production of photographs increased. These photographs were distributed and published regularly in Mutende, the Bulawayo Chronicle and the Crown Colonist. Photographs from Northern Rhodesia were also used and distributed by the PIO in Nairobi and a set was sent to the Picture Post to illustrate Northern Rhodesia's war effort. Photographic and written material was sent to the MOI for distribution to the British press and for the MOI's publication, East Africa at War. An article, 'Temporary Wartime Housing in Northern Rhodesia', was prepared for the Architectural Magazine, 'Northern Rhodesia' for the Empire Magazine and 'the Work of the Women's Institute in Northern Rhodesia', 'Northern Rhodesian Women's War Work', and 'Government House, Northern Rhodesia' for the Lady and Good Housekeeping.<sup>175</sup>

Approximately 60,000 items of propaganda material, posters, pamphlets, booklets, photographs, leaflets, postcards etc. were received from Britain, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, the United States, India and the Congo and distributed each month by the Information Office, which

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<sup>172</sup> ibid.

<sup>173</sup> ibid.

<sup>174</sup> PRO, INF1/354, Wathen to Northcote, 5 April 1945.

<sup>175</sup> ibid.



far exceeded the requirements of a territory the size of Northern Rhodesia. Material had been distributed mainly by the local District Officers but this had led to bottlenecks. Therefore, the Information Office distributed more material directly to individuals, schools, clubs and societies. In addition Information Office Bookstalls were established in each large population centre in Northern Rhodesia and manned by volunteers.<sup>176</sup>

The Information Office had its own Mobile Cinema and Film Section which had overcome difficulties in obtaining supplies of apparatus and suitable films. The section gave 90 shows to 60,000 Africans between July 1942 and June 1943. More than 6,500 feet of film was shot in Northern Rhodesia which resulted in the production of two army recruiting films, two newsreels for local use, a local interest film on the subject of 'native blacksmithing', a film on copper production, material sent to Nairobi for inclusion in East African Newsreel, a 'Target Film' to assist in the drive for war charities and a film about 'native' life in Barotseland. Northern Rhodesia showed films on football and health received from Southern Rhodesia and films from the South African Bureau of Information. MOI films were now shown on the commercial circuit.<sup>177</sup>

The Information Office used all propaganda media for the conduct of campaigns on copper production, salvage, careless talk costs lives, war savings and target month for war charities. The Office's 'public relations' activities, acting as a liaison between the government and the public resulted in a growing confidence in the Office by outside officials and the public. This was evidenced by the increase of visitors to the Office, increased demand for Newsletters, the reporting of rumours and requests for information and advice. The office received about 200 letters a month.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> ibid.

<sup>177</sup> ibid.

<sup>178</sup> ibid.

The Colonial Office was delighted with the progress made by Franklin's office and was impressed that so much had been achieved with so small a staff.<sup>179</sup> They especially liked the newsletters produced by the Office and the developments made in the 'public relations' field. It was hoped that Franklin could play in the post-war period:

a more useful and responsible part in the administration, in respect not only of propaganda directed to the immediate war effort but of civil developments, political, social and economic, in connection with which the Government is concerned to assure itself of the support and understanding of public opinion.

There was a growing recognition that it was no longer sufficient to regard the colonial press as a 'gauge of public opinion'. If information work was to be successful in the colonies, it would have to embrace 'public relations' activities on the Northern Rhodesian model.<sup>180</sup> It was also thought that a good 'public relations' service in the colonies would be of the utmost importance post-war because, if it were handled in the right way it could do much

to bridge the awkward gap which we may expect between the rise of political consciousness and the time, which may be far distant, when some of the political aspirations aroused can be satisfied.<sup>181</sup>

#### Political Developments in Africa

Even during the war good public relations alone were not enough to satisfy political aspirations. While the declared policy of the British government was economic and social development and gradual progress towards self-government in a 'partnership' with the colonies, the Colonial Office was subjected to pressure from the white settler communities in East and Central Africa 'to accede to consitutional innovations for closer union which had

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<sup>179</sup> PRO, C0875/7/14, Wathen to Franklin, 26 October 1943.

<sup>180</sup> PRO, C0875/5/15, minutes by Morgan, 2 and 11 June 1943.

<sup>181</sup> PRO, C0875/5/15, minute by Sabine, 24 June 1943.



been inspired by wartime expedients'.<sup>182</sup>

In spite of the increasing commitment to the coordination of wartime activities on a regional basis, the Colonial Office had tried to avoid public discussion of closer union throughout the war. While the economic merits and practicalities of economic regional cooperation and its continuation after the war had been accepted by the Colonial Office these developments intensified the political demands of settler communities for reconsideration of the question of closer union. George Seel head of the East African department of the Colonial Office explained 'in a world of planned and controlled production ... the advantages of larger groupings, in East Africa as elsewhere, have become clearer'. Similarly, as Sir Philip Mitchell, in charge of East Africa's war effort put it, 'there can never be a reversion to pre-war separation. War is a good umbrella and the time is ripe to take a walk under it'.<sup>183</sup>

The question of closer union in East Africa had received 'considerable attention again in the Kenya press'. It was recognised by the Colonial Office that Lord Hailey favoured a regional grouping of the East African territories and believed that 'salvation would come from making the Kenya settler a part of a much larger unit'. The Governor of Kenya, Sir Henry Moore, was a strong advocate of closer union. Moreover the Colonial Office also had to consider the possible political penetration of South Africa in both East and Central Africa. Closer union offered the settler communities an alternative to overtures from Pretoria. On the other hand, it was recognised that there were 'strong elements' in the House of Commons, in particular within the Labour Party who were 'bitterly

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<sup>182</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.225.

<sup>183</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, minute by Seel, 15 February 1943; CO822/108/19, Mitchell to the Colonial Office, 15 January 1941. See further N.J. Westcott, 'Closer Union and the future of East Africa, 1939-48: A case study in the 'Official Mind of Imperialism', The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 10:1 (1981), p.69.

opposed' to closer union.<sup>184</sup> Not least because it had been the stated policy of the British government to regard 'native interests' as paramount.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies's position was explained to Moore. It was not 'feasible' to take up this question under present conditions as all energies 'must be directed to winning the war'. In these circumstances it was unlikely that Cabinet or Parliament could find time to consider closer union. Lord Moyne had no objections to the secret discussion of closer union between the East African Governors but

nothing should be done to lend colour to any impression among the public or indeed in official circles that [the] question is being taken up by [the] Government.<sup>185</sup>

The Colonial Office attempted to avoid a move towards closer union during the war and, in the meantime, maintained a 'midway position without a commitment for or against closer union'. The danger remained that unless the Colonial Office took some kind of lead over the question, the British Government might be faced with the 'fait accompli'. Having experience a degree of new power and regional collaboration in a wartime organisation, this 'would almost certainly create a situation which would lead up directly to the creation of an East African Dominion or quasi-Dominion as the end of the war'.<sup>186</sup>

The Colonial Office's desire to keep discussions about the question of closer union private did not meet with complete success. For example, an article in the Economist, 'Test in Africa', alerted the public to the dangers of the wartime developments in Africa that 'vested interests appear to be entrenching themselves in their name

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<sup>184</sup> PRO, CO822/108/19, minute by Watherston, 25 January 1941; minutes of a conversation between Lord Moyne and Lord Hailey, 18 April 1941; Kenya to Colonial Office, 14 January 1942; minute by Dawe, 1 May 1942.

<sup>185</sup> PRO, CO822/108/19, the Colonial Office to Kenya, Dawe to Moore, 21 January 1942.

<sup>186</sup> PRO, CO822/108/19, minute by Gater, 5 May 1942; minutes of a meeting in the Secretary of State's room, 10 June 1942.



of wartime efficiency':

The colonies of East and Central Africa are being drawn more and more into the war - militarily, by the Japanese threat to the Indian Ocean, economically, by the supply demands of the armies of the Middle East. Yet, the result has not been to associate the whole people of these colonies more closely with Great Britain in the war effort, to give Europeans and Africans a common basis for working together and to promote in both races a feeling of responsibility. Instead, the opportunity has been taken, whether unconsciously or not, to advance the interests of the Europeans.

In Northern Rhodesia, the article continued, Europeans filled executive posts. The Europeans supported amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, 'whose native policy is restrictive: consequently, anything which puts them in a more powerful position is particularly regrettable'. The Economist called for reform and the restatement of British government policy that native interests were paramount:

Hitherto, British policy in East and Central Africa has been negative. In the interests of the Africans, it has opposed amalgamation between the Rhodesias and Nyasaland and it has attempted to be a bulwark between them and the white settlers. But no positive policy has been offered in return before the course of the war raised the well-known obstacles - and excuses.<sup>187</sup>

In August 1942 the Governor of Kenya, Sir Henry Moore came to London to discuss the question of closer union with Lord Cranborne, the then new Secretary of State for the Colonies. Cranborne argued that the fall of Malaya had resulted in demands in both Britain and the United States for increased African participation in government. Given the wartime regional administrative developments in East Africa and the growth of settler power through bodies like the Civil Defence and Supply Council, there was the danger that people in Britain 'might think that a constitutional development was in fact taking place and that the Secretary of State no longer exercised control'. Moore was sure that the Europeans would be prepared to 'accept the idea of partnership with Africans after the war' but they wanted 'a lot of other things on their own account', for example, 'a

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<sup>187</sup> The Economist, 22 August 1942.

greater share in government'.<sup>188</sup>

The East African Department of the Colonial Office prepared a memorandum on East African policy on the following assumption:

the question is no longer 'should closer union be the aim of policy?' but 'what form of closer union is most likely efficiently to secure the defence and the economic and welfare of the inhabitants of those territories?'

The Department proposed a federal solution under a Governor General. It was thought that Africans would accept this proposal as long as it was made clear that there were open opportunities for all races to take their part in public affairs, that there would be progressive education of Africans in public affairs and that there would be no encroachment by settlers on native lands.<sup>189</sup>

Moore envisioned not a federal East Africa but a unitary state: 'British East Africa'. Seel thought that the economic argument for closer union was now 'incontrovertible' but foresaw problems of presenting such a plan as it would need to be based on a better argument than it was good for big business. Seel was critical of Moore's proposal because 'insufficient attention seems to have been paid to the factor created by the recognition of the duty of Colonial powers to facilitate the assumption by Colonial peoples of a share in their own government'. Furthermore, as the head of African Division, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Sir Arthur Dawe pointed out, Moore's proposal would have to go to Cabinet and it would not be possible 'to get this scheme accepted by opinion here'.<sup>190</sup>

It was the instinct of the fifth wartime Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, to 'scrap' any schemes for closer union in East Africa because they would

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<sup>188</sup> PRO, CO822/108/19, minutes of a meeting in the Secretary of State's room, 25 August 1942.

<sup>189</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, memorandum by the East African Department, March 1943.

<sup>190</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, Moore to the Colonial Office, 20 April 1943; minute by Seel, 17 May 1943; minute by Dawe, 19 May 1943.



be unacceptable to Cabinet, to Parliament and to British public opinion. Dawe stressed the need to take the initiative now or be faced with the scenario of a settler 'ultimatum' later. Therefore Dawe recommended the preparation of a plan for federal union. Federal union rather than a unitary state would make the task of 'political presentation' easier.<sup>191</sup>

In the meantime, however, Stanley had made his speech on the future of British colonial policy to the House of Commons in July 1943 which had given the go ahead to the Colonial Office and MOI's campaign for 'partnership' between the colonies and Britain. The Times Nairobi correspondent, George Kinnear, reported that the statement had been 'well received' in Kenya and that the East African Standard welcomed

the emergence of the idea of partnership in place of the one-sided doctrine of trusteeship, and interprets this partnership as meaning 'active cooperation and shared responsibility in the evolution of policy accepted in common by Great Britain and the colonies'.

The East African Standard, however, sought to remind Stanley that conditions in East Africa required special treatment. The European community was 'virile ... spreading rapidly and growing apace' and wanted immediate action for the benefit of the whole of East Africa. The Europeans would not be content to wait for the 'fulfillment of the long process of African education, social and economic development and progress visualized by the Secretary of State's plan'.<sup>192</sup> 'Partnership' would not, it appeared, solve the problems of white nationalism.

The Colonial Office thought that a solution to the closer union question had now become urgent as the basic principles of the government's new policy appeared to be under threat from the white settlers; the 'early settlement of political conflict ... is a necessary preliminary to H.M.G.'s policy of social and economic betterment for

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<sup>191</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, minutes of a meeting held in the Secretary of State's room, 4 June 1943; Stanley to Moore, 15 June 1943.

<sup>192</sup> The Times, 17 July 1943.

Africans'. The Lord Privy Seal, Lord Cranborne, made a personal appeal to the Labour Party leader, Clement Attlee to accept a plan for closer union in East Africa by arguing

The white people of Kenya and Tanganyika are already extremely restive under Whitehall government. They will not stand it permanently, and we shall, I am convinced, be unable to coerce them, even if we wish to do so. If we allow relations between the home and local governments to reach a deadlock we shall be beaten as we have always been beaten in the past.

If the trend towards closer union was resisted, continued Cranborne, the white communities would be alienated and pushed towards South Africa, which would 'from the point of view of the black population, be a disastrous development'.<sup>193</sup>

In spite of these arguments Clement Attlee was unimpressed. At a meeting in the Colonial Office he said he 'failed to see any adequate case made out for closer union' and that the Labour Party would never accept an unofficial majority [i.e. white settler majority] governing East Africa.<sup>194</sup>

While the domestic political situation in Britain was unlikely to produce agreement on closer union for East Africa, doubts were also expressed in the Colonial Office. As Seel noted, if Moore's plan for a unitary state in East Africa was conceded, 'the Secretary of State would be on very difficult ground in refusing to concede it in Central Africa'. In order to find a way out of this impasse, Stanley decided to ask for the views of the other East African Governors on closer union.<sup>195</sup>

The results were not encouraging. While the Governors of Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar would consider federal economic cooperation, none appeared to favour political union for fear of being dominated by white settlers in

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<sup>193</sup> PRO, C0822/108/20, 'Reasons for urgency in dealing with the East African problem', undated; Cranborne to Attlee, 22 July 1943.

<sup>194</sup> PRO, C0822/108/20, minutes of a meeting at the Colonial Office, 5 August 1943.

<sup>195</sup> PRO, C0822/108/20, minute by Seel, 6 August 1943; Stanley to Dundas (Uganda), Jackson (Tanganyika) and Pilling (Zanzibar), 7 September 1943.



Kenya. Therefore it was unlikely that these three territories would accept either the federal or the unitary plans for closer union.<sup>196</sup>

In the face of these difficulties Stanley admitted to Moore that he was at a loss over the next step. He did not want to see the situation dragged out, but, because of the opposition of the Labour Party to any form of closer union, Stanley felt unable to go to Cabinet with a recommendation for a statement to be made that the government intended to establish a unitary government for East Africa. The East African Governors were equally opposed to another Parliamentary Commission into the subject as it would produce 'fruitless public controversy'. Moreover, the domestic opposition to closer union in Britain had intensified. Arthur Creech Jones had openly admitted suspicion of settler intentions in a House of Commons debate on 17 December 1943, while the FCB had published a research pamphlet, Kenya - White Man's Country?<sup>197</sup>

The Colonial Office faced a dilemma. It was anxious to maintain the minimum coordination of the East African territories in the post-war period, but it was faced with the concerns of the East African territories that

despite all the safeguards that could be devised, the European settlers of Kenya would in practice control policy and its application. The whole dog would in fact be wagged by its tail.<sup>198</sup>

The wartime government failed to find a way out of the deadlock. Further developments would have to await consideration by post-war governments.

#### Amalgamation in Central Africa

While the British government had attempted to avoid public discussion of the question of closer union in East

<sup>196</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, meeting in the Secretary of State's room, 29 October 1943.

<sup>197</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, Stanley to Moore, 13 January 1944; minute by Seel, 15 February 1944.

<sup>198</sup> PRO, CO822/108/20, minute by Seel, 15 February 1944; CO822/114/10, Hathorn Hall (Uganda) to Stanley, 8 February 1945.

Africa, it was equally determined to avoid a similar discussion about the amalgamation of North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The 1939 Bledisloe Report had pointed out the advantages of larger units, but had not recommended full amalgamation. Instead the Report recommended the establishment of an Inter-Territorial Council for Central Africa. In 1940 the British government secured a 'gentleman's agreement' with the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Godfrey Huggins\*, not to raise the issue of amalgamation during the war. So sensitive was the government to this issue, that it had even refused to publish a report by Lord Hailey on the effect of amalgamation on native policy in the three territories.<sup>199</sup>

In 1943 a speech by the South African Prime Minister, General Smuts\*, had the effect of re-opening the public debate on the question of amalgamation in Central Africa. In November 1943 Smuts, said he favoured the establishment of a regional commission for the continent of Africa. He proposed a Pan-African conference to be held at some time in the future to discuss regional economic cooperation and held out the possibility of a federation of South and Central Africa. This led to press speculation in Southern Rhodesia about the implication of this on the issue of amalgamation in Central Africa. For example in an editorial 'Time to Think of the Future', the Bulawayo Chronicle acknowledged that the political situation in Southern Rhodesia was 'very fluid' and that Huggins had agreed not to raise the amalgamation issue during the war. There would come a time in the not too distant future when the Southern Rhodesian attitude to this and Smuts's regional proposals would have to be formulated. Southern Rhodesia, it argued, should not be left out of these discussions and it was time that the country's viewpoint was 'crystallised'.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> PRO, C0847/22/2, Colonial Office to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 4 March 1942. For the debate on the publication of Hailey's report see PRO, D035/1161/R.208/2/file.

<sup>200</sup> PRO, D035/1161/R.208/13, the Bulawayo Chronicle, 9 November 1943.



The Colonial Office was concerned that Smuts would promote a conference to discuss the future of Africa during the war. Oliver Stanley talked to Smuts and was relieved to discover that he had no intention of promoting political connections in either East or Central Africa.<sup>201</sup> A retreat from this controversy was evident by a denial of the British High Commissioner in Southern Rhodesia that Huggins and Smuts had discussed post-war Pan-African plans or the incorporation of Rhodesia into the Union of South Africa.<sup>202</sup> But controversy did not disappear. The Economist urged the British government to stand firm against any Southern Rhodesian demands for amalgamation at the forthcoming empire conference in May 1944 emphasising the differences in native policy in the Central African territories:

The Colonial Office policy maintains the paramountcy of native interests and the ability of the African eventually to govern his own territory. Southern Rhodesian policy is based on the paramountcy of European interests and the complete segregation of the African in the colony's social and economic life.

It was noted that under the Premiership of Huggins, African welfare had improved. Therefore, while the Colonial Office was 'right in steadfastly resisting the amalgamation scheme' as long as Southern Rhodesia's native policy was 'based on restraint of the African's rights', its hand could be strengthened 'if it were equally energetic in pursuing social and economic development schemes and equally willing to spend money on them as is the Government of Sir Godfrey Huggins'.<sup>203</sup>

The Colonial Office was treading on very thin ice in its Central African policy. It had proposed the continuation of war-time regional cooperation in the form of a Central African Council which would be a consultative body with a permanent secretariat under the chairmanship of

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<sup>201</sup> Louis, op.cit., p.321 citing a memorandum by Stanley on a conversation with Smuts, 19 November 1943.

<sup>202</sup> PRO, D035/1161/R.208/16, for the denials published in the Daily Telegraph, 5 February 1944 and in the Daily Express, 8 February 1944.

<sup>203</sup> The Economist, 6 May 1944.

Southern Rhodesia. While the British government regarded the establishment of the Council as a 'concrete alternative to amalgamation' it was aware that critics had accused them of 'mere window dressing'. Therefore it was of the greatest importance for the public to understand that the government 'really do intend coordination between the territories to be a reality' and not as a step on the path towards Central African amalgamation.<sup>204</sup>

This proved easier said than done. In Southern Rhodesia, the New Rhodesia realised that the Colonial Office intended 'closing the door on amalgamation for many years to come' and that Southern Rhodesia would do its best to make the Central African Council a success. The newspaper stated, however, that 'possibly its most important task will be to educate the Colonial Office'. Similarly, the Rhodesia Herald regarded the Council as a 'substitute' for amalgamation, which would 'do much to prepare the way for the ultimate acceptance of the greater concept of amalgamation' and help to 'iron out snags and difficulties which obsess the Colonial Office, particularly the position of native populations'. It concluded with:

If we must take two bites at the cherry of amalgamation, it is up to the new Council to show that the first one is followed by no gastronomical complications which might delay the enjoyment of the second one.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> PRO, DO35/1161/R.208/24, minute by Cohen, 28 February 1945.

<sup>205</sup> PRO, DO35/1161/R.208/24, the New Rhodesia, 6 April 1945; the Rhodesian Herald, 2 April 1945.



CHAPTER SEVEN  
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE  
PROJECTION OF THE 'NEW' EMPIRE, 1944-48

During 1944 the Colonial Office and the MOI seriously began to consider the future of publicity about the empire in general and Africa in particular. Debate centered on the kind of publicity organisation necessary in the post-war period both in the Colonial Office and in the colonies. These discussions on the future of publicity services were tentative because the Cabinet had not yet reached a decision on the wider questions of national publicity policy and because the future of the MOI was undecided. Nevertheless as the end of the war approached some of the old arguments outlined in chapter one resurfaced against the Colonial Office engaging in any kind of public relations activities. In order to obtain Colonial Office endorsement of a public relations strategy the Public Relations Officer Noel Sabine reviewed the record of progress made during the war. Sabine was eventually successful in achieving the permanent role for public relations in the work of the Colonial Office and the Colonial Service. A consensus was formed which acknowledged the role of public relations. Public relations work would continue to help to 'win the peace' in the colonies by popularising policies and holding the imperial line between the awakening of political consciousness and the achievement of self-government. 'Partnership' continued to be the theme of British propaganda about the colonial empire in the post-war period and was not altered with the advent of the Labour government. The policy of colonial development and welfare would now be fully implemented and Africa became the centre of Britain's colonial position.

However the post-war period brought new hardships and a series of economic crises which left a question mark over the ability of Britain to develop her colonial empire and create viable states capable of eventual self-government. By the end of the period under consideration the optimism for colonial reform of the war years and the immediate post-war period confronted the realities of Britain's

inability to deliver the benefits of 'partnership'. Bringing the modern state to Africa and the economic development of Africa was no longer the act of an altruistic colonial power. Instead of economic development which would create viable economic units, the colonies in Africa would be developed provide essential raw materials and markets upon which would help Britain's economic recovery in the post-war period. Two separate policies co-existed side by side: super exploitation on the one hand and colonial development and gradual political education on the other. By 1948 the public relations theme of 'partnership' to bring about progress in the colonies had become out of step with reality. The result of this collapse of the period of colonial reform in 1948 was a crisis of credibility and damaging criticism of Britain's reputation as a colonial power. Could public relations hold the colonial position when the gap between propaganda and policy had become so wide?

The uncertainty which surrounded the future of the government information services at the end of war produced a determined defence of the Public Relations Department by Sabine. Sabine argued strongly for the continuance of Colonial Office publicity activities as a permanent feature of government. He hope there would be no return to the pre-war position of publicity carried out by a single Press Officer. During the final stages of the war Sabine wanted a decision to be made in principle for the retention of the Colonial Office's publicity machinery.

While many in the Colonial Office recognised the necessity of wartime propaganda, some Colonial Office officials had reservations about its post-war role. Sir Sydney Caine, Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of the Economics Division, was conscious of the 'lack of sympathy' some felt to any plan to continue an active public relations policy in the post-war period. Caine's own objections were two-fold. First, propaganda was only justifiable in a wartime context. Second, the selection of material to transmit to the public was flawed because the process was not impartial. 'Confusions', he argued, would arise from the attempt to project wartime procedures and



practices into the post-war period. He grudgingly accepted activities like censorship were necessary during war and had 'obliged Government Departments to be more positive and active in the issue of information than was necessary before the war'. This was because during the war information was not as freely available as in peacetime, government Departments had the 'added responsibility to provide it' and on security grounds they had 'to think carefully about what can and cannot be published'.<sup>1</sup>

A second particular wartime factor was 'the necessity of expounding a new and unfamiliar background'. During the war the sacrifices that had been demanded from the civilian population had to be justified 'by emphasising the purposes for which we are fighting and clothing the incidents of war with as much glamour as possible'. He questioned the idea that public relations could play any part in colonial policy and also doubted whether it would be possible to 'focus peace-time efforts and enthusiasms on a goal as distinct and clear as military victory'.<sup>2</sup>

A third factor which would not apply to the post-war situation was the suspension of party politics with the government coalition of all the principal political parties which had helped, in Caine's opinion, to secure 'public acquiescence in the information activities of Government'.<sup>3</sup>

A fourth wartime factor was the projection of Britain's colonial policy overseas, particularly to the United States. This projection, Caine believed, had been an attempt to 'justify ourselves at the bar of world public opinion'. While this may have been necessary while war conditions applied because of the 'fact that American help in the war was absolutely essential', in the post-war period 'we shall not necessarily feel the same concern when our dependence on American assistance has passed'.<sup>4</sup> In this respect Caine like many of his colleagues in Whitehall

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<sup>1</sup> PRO, CO875/20/8, minute by Caine, 31 October 1944.

<sup>2</sup> ibid.

<sup>3</sup> ibid.

<sup>4</sup> ibid.

totally underestimated the degree to which Britain would be dependent on the United States in the post-war period and how Britain would have a continued need to project Britain, including her colonial policy to the United States once hostilities had ceased.<sup>5</sup>

Caine found it difficult to accept that any kind of public relations activity was necessary within the Colonial Office. He argued that the Colonial Office was not an administrating but a supervising department and, as such, had 'comparatively little direct relation with members of the public'. If public relations work was to be conducted at all, the task of explaining 'the impact of policies on individuals is almost wholly for Colonial Governments' who did have a relationship with the public. As we have seen colonial governments tended to view propaganda activities as a luxury and until the Colonial Office took the lead over the issue just before the war the examples of this kind of activity was rare in the colonial empire. While progress had been made during the war the colonial Information Officers still relied on Whitehall to provide material and guidance and this state of affairs was likely to continue for some time in the post-war period until regional organisations had been established.

Caine questioned the aim of supplying the public with 'information' about colonial policy. He argued it could never be objective due to the selection process of what kind of information should be supplied. The process of selection had important political implications. There was the danger of the government information services becoming the mouthpiece for party interests rather than the national interest. He argued it was 'only too easy to step over the line which divides support of general Government policy

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<sup>5</sup> For example c.f. C.J. Morris, 'The Labour government's policy and publicity over Palestine 1945-7', in Anthony Gorst, Lewis Johnman and W.Scott Lucas (eds.) Contemporary British History 1931-1961: Politics and the Limit of Policy (London, 1991) for the importance of projecting Britain's policy in Palestine to the United States to gain their support at a time when Britain was vulnerable to American pressure during the negotiations for the post-war American Loan.



from support of the policy of a particular Minister or Party'. An even worse scenario for Caine would be if

the policies which a Colonial Office Public Relations Department would seek to support would become in course of time neither 'generally agreed' policies nor even the programmes of political parties but simply the policies of a bureaucratic clique.<sup>6</sup>

Even if the Colonial Office accepted the case for an active public relations policy Caine doubted that the policy would meet with success as 'the capacity of the average person's mind to absorb information on a serious subjects is limited'. By implication therefore the British public was too stupid to understand such a serious subject like the administration of the dependencies for which they were through Parliament ultimately responsible.<sup>7</sup>

Caine thought that the Colonial Office should limit its public relations activities to the pre-war practice of supplying information 'on demand' and not engage in the 'active and inevitably selective presentation of information'.<sup>8</sup> For who would decide on what basis the material should be selected?

This function of selection is, in fact, in some ways the hallmark of active 'public relations' as opposed to the mere passive issue of reports as and when asked for. It is implicit in the word 'theme' as commonly used in public relations work. It is obvious enough why. When we set out to project Kenya here, we have got to decide whether to see through the eyes of Margery Perham or Elspeth Huxley. When we 'project' the United Kingdom in the Colonies, we may decide to recommend an up-to-date portrayal of English social life; do we choose 'Love on the Dole' or 'Mrs. Miniver'?

Indeed if it had been a mere choice between seeing colonial policy through the eyes of Margery Perham or the eyes of Elspeth Huxley the colonial propaganda selection process may not have been impartial. In the first place as the collection of their correspondence to each other first published in 1944, Race and Politics in Kenya revealed, they had very different and partial views about Kenya. We

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<sup>6</sup> ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ibid.

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

saw in chapter three the settler background Elspeth Huxley brought with her to her job as liaison officer at the BBC. In chapter four Margery Perham's position as both a critic and reformer of British colonial policy and how she was also deeply involved in the training of Colonial Service officers was also noted. In their correspondence these two positions were magnified: settlers vying with a benevolent Colonial Service for the title of best protector of African interests. For example Huxley had a paternalistic view of the Africans, her attitude in a 'nutshell' was that in order to advance the African she would strengthen local interests, whereas Perham would increase imperial ties. Huxley saw the leadership of Kenya coming from the Europeans, while Perham saw it coming from a gradually educated African population. Huxley viewed the settlers as a group under attack and Perham wanted to stop any further surrendering to their position. Huxley did not think settler and African interests were antagonistic but Perham thought it was time to clear Kenya of settlers altogether.<sup>9</sup>

At first sight then Caine's argument over selection appears compelling. But the implications he drew were not quite as dramatic as he portrayed. Publicity guidelines would be set by Colonial Office officials, not by Elspeth Huxley or Margery Perham. If the machinery operated properly and close liaison between the staff of the Public Relations Department and the rest of the Colonial Office was maintained problems could be avoided for the propagandists would be fully conversant with the 'official' line over issues like Kenya.

In addition to issues such as selection, others criticised the retention of public relations machinery in the post-war period both within the Colonial Office and in the colonies on financial grounds. Although the colonial governments experienced new 'buoyant revenues' as a result of the wartime demand for colonial produce, this prosperity would not necessarily continue into the post-war period. Therefore the Colonial Office should be chary of taking a

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<sup>9</sup> Elspeth Huxley and Margery Perham, Race and Politics in Kenya (London, 1958), pp.151-2, 236, 29 and 30.



strong lead in the public relations field because of the danger that 'these revenues may be dissipated among too many activities, with the result that no one is performed really well and with the further danger of extra difficulties in the event of a future slump'.<sup>10</sup>

It was this kind of opposition that Sabine had to overcome in order to obtain the acceptance of a continued role for public relations in the post-war period. Sabine made his case by reviewing achievements made during the war and then went on to consider colonial publicity objectives and how they could be secured in the future. He argued that public relations work should not be abandoned just when it had begun to achieve some measure of success. There were four aspects of colonial publicity already in operation, first, publicity in the United Kingdom, second, publicity in the colonies, third, publicity in the rest of the empire and fourth, publicity in foreign countries. Although these aspects targeted different audiences, Sabine recommended that there should be an end to the present practice of divided control between the MOI and the Colonial Office with ultimate control over both policy and practice resting in one authority, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Naturally cooperation would continue with other departments and the Colonial Office would use the technical facilities of whatever kind of 'General Production Division' the government decided to establish after the war.<sup>11</sup>

Sabine noted that the wartime experience of divided control between the MOI and the Colonial Office had not produced a happy relationship. The evidence we have seen supports his view, particularly in the first half of the war. At times there had been mutual resentment with discussions over colonial propaganda 'conducted in an atmosphere of intrigue and personalities'.<sup>12</sup> The exception

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<sup>10</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minute by Williams, 23 February 1945.

<sup>11</sup> PRO, CO875/20/8, Sabine's note on the future of colonial publicity, 4 October 1944.

<sup>12</sup> ibid.

to this rather 'gloomy picture' was when Gervas Huxley headed the Empire Division at the MOI. At that time the relationship between the MOI and the Colonial Office was more efficient and successful. This had not been the rule, however and was largely due to Huxley's 'unorthodox views on the relative functions of the two Departments, and to his outstanding ability to handle some of the personalities involved'. In the absence of such a strong personality like Huxley, the principle of divided control would mean a return to a situation where time would be wasted the efficiency of business would be prejudiced by continuous 'discussion, negotiation, and appeasement'.<sup>13</sup> Sabine's implication was clear. In order to preserve the Colonial Office's area of responsibility, the Colonial Office would have to remain active in propaganda.

Sabine continued his case for the defence by outlining the publicity achievements during the war. There had been considerable improvement in the Colonial Office's relationship with the press. With the exception of criticism resulting from the fall of Singapore and the loss of Malaya in 1942, the tone of the press in general could be contrasted to that of the pre-war period when 'criticism of our Colonial policy was the general rule'. Sabine suspected that this increased press interest in colonial affairs could be attributed to the 'recovery of national self-confidence' and reaction against 'American criticisms of 'Imperialism' but also 'the greatly increased output from the Press Office of material about the Colonial war effort, development measures, and constitutional progress'.<sup>14</sup> Indeed the Colonial Office line over statements of policy like the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was adopted by the Press which was also positive about the 'partnership' theme.

The Colonial Office received increasing numbers of requests for official publications and, as a result of Gervas Huxley's efforts, the MOI produced a wide range of

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<sup>13</sup> ibid.

<sup>14</sup> ibid.



leaflets, posters, pamphlets and maps. Colonial subjects were of increasing interest to publishers and Sabine hoped that this development could be encouraged in the future when wartime restrictions like the paper shortage no longer applied.<sup>15</sup>

The output of the MOI's Films Division had been 'disappointing' but things were 'moving in the right direction'; increasing numbers of films, in addition to those of the Colonial Film Unit, were being produced as increased material became available from the colonies. Cameramen were sent to East and West Africa which had produced some 'first-class material'. Very close liaison had been established between the Colonial Office and the BBC resulting in more effective cooperation on the Overseas Service than on the Home Service as the Talks Department had been reluctant to take advantage of the system of consultation between the BBC and the Colonial Office.<sup>16</sup>

The public relations job had therefore just begun and there was no room for complacency. Although progress had been made during the war to educate British public opinion about the colonial empire, 'it would be illusory to think we have done much more than scratched the surface' as the mass of public opinion had been little affected. In the post-war period it was critical that the foundations which had been laid during the war should be built on. Official publications together with indirect publicity for example, helping publishers and writers by providing them with facilities and information, should increase. This kind of public relations activity, Sabine noted, should not be entrusted to an outside body. One of the chief lessons during the war had been that it was essential that all material 'should be checked for facts and policy'. This could only be done by the Colonial Office. Moreover, there were policy questions about the future of broadcasting and the cinema in the colonies which had to be taken before any publicity programme could proceed. Again only the Colonial

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<sup>15</sup> ibid.

<sup>16</sup> ibid.

Office could give this guidance.<sup>17</sup>

As far as publicity in the colonies was concerned, Sabine's task of persuasion would not be so difficult as even a staunch critic like Caine conceded that public relations was a justifiable colonial government activity. Sabine noted that the four functions of Public Relations agencies in the colonies had been 'generally accepted' as:

- A. To explain Government policy to the people.
- B. To obtain external publicity for the affairs of the Colony.
- C. To provide information to the Colony about developments and thought in the United Kingdom.
- D. To co-ordinate and advise on departmental publicity campaigns.

Sabine recommended that the most important post-war development was the decentralisation of the production of publicity materials in regional publicity organisations in the colonies. London would then provide basic material which could be adapted for use in the colonies. The Colonial Office Public Relations Department's role would be to assist the colonies in this task through the provision of guidance and by creating the 'right kind of relationship' between the Colonial Office, the colonial governments and unofficial publicity agencies like the BBC and film companies.<sup>18</sup> Therefore Sabine's defence of public relations in the colonies also served to defend the continued existence of the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office.

Above all, Sabine argued, it should be recognised that the Colonial Office would be neglecting its responsibility if it were to return to the pre-war situation and abandon the policy of educating British public opinion about the colonial empire. He re-stated the case for public relations. The act of popularising government policies was part of the democratic process:

It is clearly not in the interests either of the Colonies or of the Mother country that Colonial affairs should be in the hands of officials who are not subject to the stimulus and check of public criticism. At the same time such criticism if it is to

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<sup>17</sup> ibid.

<sup>18</sup> ibid.



be fair must rest upon the basis of informed public opinion. Those who are in a position to influence policy as officials or unofficials should be restrained from unrealistic doctrinaire extravagances by the sound common sense which the British public can be relied upon to show with regard to any matter in which its interest is aroused, if it is made aware of the broad issues involved.<sup>19</sup>

Sabine was aided in his case for the retention of his department in the post-war period by the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Machinery of Government that 'considerable government publicity will be required after the war'. There would be no return to the post-World War I situation when the Ministry of Information was disbanded and nothing replaced it. The MOI would be replaced by a common service organisation which would work in cooperation with the propaganda organisations which existed in other departments of state. Therefore, Public Relations Departments of 'appropriate size' would be necessary in departments following the disappearance of the MOI. Overseas publicity would be the responsibility of the government departments concerned. Sir Thomas Lloyd noted that, if these proposals were accepted by the Cabinet, the Colonial Office would have a case to retain the Public Relations Department and even see it expand.<sup>20</sup>

At a meeting of the Under-Secretaries of State in the Colonial Office on 24 October 1944 it was decided that all the 'existing activities' in the public relations field should continue for the time being.<sup>21</sup> Sabine also noted that the Prime Minister had agreed that although the Cabinet had not decided the future of government publicity organisation as a whole, the Machinery of Government Committee's proposals 'may be taken as assumptions for planning purposes'.<sup>22</sup>

Sabine was able to obtain Colonial Office agreement on the future of publicity in Africa. Sabine toured Africa

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<sup>19</sup> ibid., Appendix A.

<sup>20</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minute by Lloyd, 16 October 1944.

<sup>21</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minute by Lloyd, 11 November 1944.

<sup>22</sup> PRO, C0875/20/8, minute by Sabine, 30 June 1945.

between November 1944 and March 1945 in order to report on the public relations departments in the colonial territories and to discuss future lines of development.<sup>23</sup> He appealed to conservative elements within the Colonial Office and Colonial Service by suggesting that there was nothing new about public relations in the colonies as it had always been part of the work of good colonial administration. Indeed, 'every time a District Commissioner addresses a native council, every time a Governor explains Government policy at a Caledonian dinner, he is engaged in a public relations activity'. It was important, argued Sabine, that public relations should not be regarded as 'esoteric or extraneous to administration' but should be regarded as an 'integral part of administration'. In the future the functions of public relations work should be:

A. To interpret the policy of the government to the people, and the views of the people to the government in the closest co-operation with the Administration and the technical departments.

B. To provide information about Colonial affairs in Great Britain and elsewhere.

C. To provide the Colonial public with information about developments and events in Great Britain; to interpret His Majesty's Government's Colonial policy to the Colonial public.

D. To act as an advisory and co-ordinating agency for the planning and execution of Departmental propaganda campaigns.<sup>24</sup>

Colonial governments would be confronted with both problems and opportunities after the war. The local populations many of whom were 'at present illiterate' but were also curious. They had been exposed to new experiences as a result of the war and were 'more conscious than ever before of unsatisfied hopes and unresolved apprehensions'. These populations would continue to be vulnerable to 'outside' influence in the post-war period. In these dangerous circumstances public relations could

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<sup>23</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, Sabine's 'Report of Tour in Africa', undated.

<sup>24</sup> ibid.



help by providing 'guidance and leadership'.<sup>25</sup> However this potential danger could be turned to an advantage if the colonial governments themselves took the initiative in helping to mould colonial public opinion.<sup>26</sup>

While in a general way Sabine considered the war propaganda in Africa had been a success since there had been little resistance to the war, African troops had been recruited and fought bravely and voluntary gifts to the war effort had been donated, there were also many Africans who had little understanding of the war and were more interested in their daily lives. Others had 'remained passive and apathetic at the prospect of a change of rule'. Therefore in the future an increased effort would be needed to 'strengthen their connexion with us, and give them a more conscious sense of their association with the Empire and Commonwealth'.<sup>27</sup>

Sabine also recommended that there had to be a change in colonial government attitudes towards public relations work as part of the overall colonial administration. During the war there had been a change in the character of colonial Information Offices in Africa. Some had already made the transition from war propaganda to public relations and were now explaining and interpreting government policy. But further development of these Information Offices was hindered because Public Relations Departments were not sufficiently integrated into the government as a whole and Public Relations Officers were not always kept informed of important developments 'in good time'. Public Relations Officers were also handicapped in a number of other ways. They were often preoccupied with other duties. They were not always specialists in propaganda, at times they resisted the use of new techniques and had an inadequate knowledge of how to plan a propaganda campaign. They were further hampered by a lack of local production

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<sup>25</sup> ibid.

<sup>26</sup> ibid.

<sup>27</sup> ibid.

facilities.<sup>28</sup>

After the war it was of particular importance therefore that the Public Relations Officer should be in close contact with the Administration and not be seen as a separate department of government. The Public Relations Officer should be an Administrative officer and a member of the Secretariat itself. This would enable the Public Relations Officer to maintain close contact with policy in order to be ready for consultation at all times. This officer should not have the dual role of public relations and education officer. The Public Relations Officer should be a 'professional propagandist' and learn the basic methods of propaganda planning.<sup>29</sup>

It was not Sabine's intention to see 'propaganda running riot all over Africa'. It was recognised, however, that increased quantities of publicity material would be required in the future. This material would be more effective if produced in Africa itself so that it contained the sufficient 'local colour' which was often lacking in material produced by the MOI in London. This trend towards the decentralisation of production had already begun in Achimote and Nairobi and should be continued in the post-war period. Decentralisation had the added advantage of being more economical. It was also time to lay plans for the development of local broadcasting in Africa and to build on the close relationship that had been established with the BBC. The first priority would be to establish or strengthen local broadcasting stations in each territory and then to establish a central broadcasting station for each region. The central stations would relay the BBC's Overseas Service programmes, broadcast magazine and feature programmes covering the whole region and broadcast the 'cream of these programmes to the outside world'.<sup>30</sup>

The Public Relations Officers would also be expected to produce more material which could be used by the

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<sup>28</sup> ibid.

<sup>29</sup> ibid.

<sup>30</sup> ibid.



Colonial Office in its campaign to educate British public opinion about the colonies. This would require an increase in the supply of news and feature material. Sabine therefore recommended that each regional propaganda organisation should employ two journalists. Nairobi should immediately proceed with its plans to establish a photographic unit and the Colonial Office would encourage Reuters to send correspondents to Africa.<sup>31</sup>

The main obstacle to this expansion plan was finance. Sabine feared that after the war there would 'be a tendency in the Colonies as in this country, to direct the axe of retrenchment to the young sapling of Public Relations'. Sabine thought that a compromise could be achieved and proposed that financial responsibility for the functions of the Public Relations departments in Africa be divided. The colonial governments would have the responsibility for interpreting local government policy to the people and the Colonial Office would have the responsibility of projecting colonial affairs to Britain and overseas as well as Britain to Africa. Sabine hoped the Colonial Development and Welfare Act could provide finance for publicity connected with local development schemes.<sup>32</sup>

At a meeting between the MOI and the Colonial Office in January 1945 Sabine's recommendations about the functions of the Public Relations Officers and the principle of decentralisation were accepted and formed the basis of a circular despatch to the African governors.<sup>33</sup> Before the despatch was sent the Colonial Office discussed the question of finance, the main obstacle to the implementation of the post-war plan. Andrew Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for the Colonies responsible for East and Central Africa thought that the Colonial Office should present the case for increased public relations activities and let the governors make up their

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<sup>31</sup> ibid.

<sup>32</sup> ibid.

<sup>33</sup> PRO, C0875/20/3, minutes of a meeting between the Colonial Office and the MOI on publicity in Africa, undated.

own minds about what they were going to do and let them set their own priorities.<sup>34</sup> Sir George Gater, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies thought that it was unlikely that the African governments would 'indulge in any very extravagant organisation for public relations' particularly when they were to be warned by the Colonial Office that they would have to bear the bulk of the cost out of their own pockets.<sup>35</sup> The despatch embodied all of Sabine's recommendations and warnings about finance and was commended by Oliver Stanley as 'excellent'.<sup>36</sup>

A copy of Sabine's report was also sent to the BBC with the Colonial Office's recommendation that plans for broadcasting in Africa would be considered as part of 'the general approach of the whole problem of post-war broadcasting throughout the Colonies'. The BBC welcomed the report and the indication that the Colonial Office planned a comprehensive approach to colonial broadcasting.<sup>37</sup>

The African governors were asked for their reactions to Sabine's proposals contained in the circular despatch. The only reply that survives in the Colonial Office files is that of Sir John Hathorn Hall, the Governor of Uganda and the former British Resident of Zanzibar. Hall agreed there would 'be a need to continue to expand publicity services after the war'. He agreed that Public Relations Officers should be appointed and would function in accordance with the role defined by Sabine. He further welcomed the proposal for regional production units. The Public Relations staff he envisioned was a Public Relations Officer (with the head of the East Africa Commands Mobile Propaganda Unit, Captain Dickson as a possible candidate), aided by two assistants, a technical supervisor of cinema

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<sup>34</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minute by Cohen, 26 February 1945.

<sup>35</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, minute by Gater, 13 March 1945.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, circular despatch to all African colonies, 28 April 1945; minute by Stanley, 21 March 1945.

<sup>37</sup> PRO, CO875/20/3, Lloyd to Rendall, 7 May 1945; Rendall to Lloyd, 15 May 1945.



units, a photographer and an Asian Information Officer.<sup>38</sup>

In the MOI thoughts also turned to post-war planning and the future of the Empire Division. Although the future of the MOI was undecided, the Empire Division argued that in the post-war period there should be no reduction of effort in publicising the British empire. The Empire Division had reached the same conclusion as Sabine, that there should be a redoubling of effort in the projection of the British empire. Indeed, it was more important than ever to remain active in this area particularly in East and West Africa since the effects of developments in communications could not be reversed:

Often for the first time in their history, the most modern features of radio, films, photographs, press services ... have been introduced into Colonies thus creating new habits and an ever increasing demand for the 'wonders' of the modern world. Many parts of the Colonial Empire are awakening from an age-long sleep, and unsatisfied demands for enlightenment and guidance, and failure to meet these demands ... will have the most serious repercussions.

The wartime tasks had been:

keeping Colonies well informed, placing events in their right perspective, strengthening loyalty to the Crown, building up a belief in ultimate victory and persuading the various peoples to increase their appropriate contributions to the total war effort.

No matter how 'difficult' some of these tasks had proved to be they were 'insignificant compared with the task of projecting the peace and the thousand and one problems which it will bring in its wake'.<sup>39</sup>

A consensus appears to have been reached, in spite of reservations within the Colonial Office about the continuation of the Public Relations Department. The wartime experience had changed the political climate and the framework within which policy operated. The wartime economic policies of London and the development and welfare policies of the British government had led to unprecedented

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<sup>38</sup> PRO, C0875/20/3, Uganda to Colonial Office, 16 July 1945.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, INF1/945, Mansergh to Grubb, 26 June 1944, containing a copy of Usill's memorandum, 'The MOI and its work in relation to the British Colonial Empire'.

intervention by the state into the affairs of the colonies. This, together with developments in communications, created a new situation and new disruptions. African opinion could no longer be ignored as it had been in the pre-war years. Indeed for British policy to succeed African participation was essential. It was also essential that the British public should continue to be educated about its colonial responsibilities in order build on the wartime efforts to create a healthy public opinion to support British colonial policy.

This consensus on colonial propaganda continued into the post-war period. The change of government in July 1945 did not affect the government's commitment to an active public relations policy. The Labour government held it as axiomatic that it was part of the government's democratic responsibility to explain their policies and create a healthy public opinion. The fear outlined by Sydney Caine that once the wartime coalition was dissolved the new government would hijack the official information services which would become party propaganda machines was rejected by the incoming Labour government. The official information services would be concerned with national projection and not party politics. It was agreed at an inter-departmental meeting of Ministers that

no government should use departmental facilities for purely Party propaganda, but every government must present to the public the facts necessary for an understanding of the government's activities. Though the boundaries between information, explanation and advocacy were tenuous, the possibility of embarrassment and misrepresentation should not deter the government from providing through an efficient information service, the material on which the public could reach an informed judgement on current affairs. Such provision was indeed the government's duty and the public's right.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> PRO, C0875/21/8, minutes of the inter-departmental GEN85/1st. meeting, 18 September 1945. The meeting was attended by the Lord President of the Council, Herbert Morrison, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Stafford Cripps, the Secretary of State for India and Burma, Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Christopher Addison, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Hall, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of



Not only was it the duty of the government to explain its activities, publicity was also seen as an important instrument in the conduct of government policy. In foreign affairs this relationship between publicity and policy had been clearly recognised:

HMG is pushing its objectives by a great variety of means ranging from military and naval measures, diplomatic representations, and various forms of international negotiation and participation in international bodies ... Publicity has a part to play in the support of many of these activities, and if it is to succeed, it is essential that it should be integrated with them and not independent of them. Actions speak louder than words, and words are more effective when they support actions.<sup>41</sup>

The organisation of government publicity services, however, had yet to be decided. The MOI was being wound up and would cease to exist at the end of March 1946. The question became what kind of organisation should replace it. Questions of responsibility for policy decisions were at the forefront of discussions. The Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was adamant that the responsibility for propaganda should not be delegated to the Central Office of Information:

In the international field we have, particularly at the present juncture, the most delicate tasks, and publicity must march so closely with policy that the Foreign Secretary cannot delegate control of information policy and its execution by our Information Services abroad.<sup>42</sup>

In a similar vein Sabine recommended that the question of responsibility should be settled in order to avoid some of the unnecessary disputes which had occurred during the war between the MOI and the Colonial Office. He urged that

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State for Foreign Affairs, Hector McNeil and the Minister of Information, Edward Williams with the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee in the chair.

<sup>41</sup> PRO, INF12/61, Foreign Office memorandum for an inter-departmental meeting on the 'Projection of Britain', July 1946.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, FO800/480/MIS/47/52, 16 December 1947 Bevin was sceptical and occasionally abusive when referring to Morrison's 'mishandling of information services', Ben Pimlott, The Political Diaries of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40 and 1945-60, (London, 1986), p.374.

the Secretary of State for the Colonies should argue for the preservation of Colonial Office responsibility:

The Colonial Secretary should retain, constitutionally and in practice, full responsibility for all colonial publicity. It is impossible to divorce publicity from policy; and the Secretary of State must possess not only the negative right of having the last word on questions of the policy and content of colonial publicity, but the positive right of initiating publicity proposals, and having them executed through whatever machinery is established for the purpose.<sup>43</sup>

Sir George Gater agreed. The Colonial Office would 'cooperate' with the new COI in the sense that the Colonial Office would use the COI's production facilities. Ultimate power would rest with the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

The essential point is that it is impossible to divorce publicity from policy. The Secretary of State is responsible for matters of policy in the Colonies. It is clear that he must retain the ultimate and general direction of publicity. The growth of self-governing institutions in the Colonies renders the relations between this country and individual colonies increasingly delicate and complex. The intrusion at this stage of development, into the field of an organisation responsible only to the Minister of Information and independent of the Secretary of State and of Colonial Governments would obviously be full of danger. But this is not to say that as long as control remains in the right place we should not use, as we have done during the war, some of the mechanical facilities offered by the Ministry.<sup>44</sup>

George Hall\*, the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1940-2, endorsed these views in a meeting with fellow Ministers. Hall argued that, 'provided technical services were available from a central organisation he would prefer that publicity work in the Colonies was done by the Colonial Office or by Colonial Governments under Colonial Office direction'.<sup>45</sup>

The MOI proved reluctant to relinquish the position it had built up during the war. The Minister of Information, Edward Williams\*, did not agree with the Foreign Office's

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<sup>43</sup> PRO, CO875/21/8, minute by Sabine, undated.

<sup>44</sup> PRO, CO875/21/8, minute by Gater, 7 September 1945.

<sup>45</sup> PRO, CO875/21/8, GEN85/1st. meeting, 18 September 1945.



contention that overseas publicity was a branch of foreign policy. Williams argued that overseas publicity was a 'function and interest of the government as a whole' and that its 'size and complexity' required a 'Department in its own right'.

Is it in fact possible to give one single instance of any importance drawn from any country during the last six years, where publicity has been out of step with policy? ... Much of the greater part of the subject matter of British publicity is the total British way of life, and in projecting this there is not the least likelihood of conflict with foreign policy as such.<sup>46</sup>

Sabine thought that it would be safe to leave it to the Foreign Office to 'demolish' these kind of arguments. The Colonial Office had never denied that overseas publicity was not the function of the government as a whole but this objection could be met by the provision of adequate co-ordinating machinery. Moreover Sabine questioned the MOI view that policy and publicity had been well co-ordinated during the war,

If it is not possible to give a single instance of any importance where publicity has been out of step with policy in the last few years it is only because of the constant vigilance on the part of the Overseas Departments. I can recall many occasions upon which the Ministry would have gone wrong if we had not guided them. They have always, of course accepted the necessity for such guidance. It has always seemed to me that if they are ready to take the guidance it is unnecessary for them to have any ministerial status; if they are not willing to accept it if turns out in practice that embarrassment and friction will result.<sup>47</sup>

Herbert Morrison, as Lord President of the Council had the responsibility for government information services. In a Cabinet paper he summarised the results of discussions he had held with Ministers. All the points made by the Foreign and Colonial Offices were met. There was general agreement that both overseas and domestic publicity should continue in peacetime. Ministers concerned would be responsible for departmental publicity. For reasons of economy, however, public relations staffs should be limited

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<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO875/21/8, Hancock to Thornley, 13 November 1945.

<sup>47</sup> PRO, Co875/21/8, minute by Sabine, 15 November 1945.

in number and 'should continue as the primary instrument for Departmental publicity and for keeping Ministers and Departments in touch with public opinion'. A common service organisation, the Central Office of Information, would undertake technical and production functions be available to both overseas and home purposes. Noting the importance of British propaganda speaking with one voice Morrison argued that there should be the maximum co-ordination of home and overseas publicity so that a 'common line' could be presented.<sup>48</sup> With this, the Cabinet agreed to wind up the MOI and replace it with a Central Office of Information.

During the early stages of the war the possible encroachment of the MOI into areas the Secretary of State for the Colonies's responsibility proved to be the catalyst to arguments in favour of the establishment of the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office. In the post-war period, the need to preserve the Secretary of State for the Colonies's responsibility against the ambitions of the COI helped Sabine to win the arguments for the retention of the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office. Indeed, the question was no longer whether the Colonial Office should retain public relations machinery but what kind of additions would have to be made so that it could carry out its post-war activities.<sup>49</sup>

In 1945 the tasks facing the Labour government were enormous. The reconstruction of Europe, the defence of empire, the evolution of anti-Soviet Cold War policy together with the rebuilding of the economy and the economic and social revolution at home required public support at a time of austerity and hardship in Britain. This led, in turn, to concerted efforts by the Labour government to project its policies not only in the domestic context but also to audiences overseas. The necessity of maintaining British prestige and influence in the reshaping of the post-war world was universally recognised by the

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<sup>48</sup> PRO, CAB129/5, C.P.(45)316, 30 November 1945.

<sup>49</sup> PRO, CO875/21/8, minute by Lloyd, 10 December 1945.



government and civil servants alike. It was also recognised, however, that Britain's physical power had been diminished. Britain had used or lost more than 25% of her assets during the war and the demands of post-war reconstruction prohibited substantial expenditure overseas. Therefore propaganda became essential in the task of maintaining Britain's status as a world power. In the short-term, propaganda would endeavour to mask Britain's weaknesses. In the long-term, after the post-war economic problems had been resolved, propaganda would encourage other countries, be they European or the new or emerging independent countries within the Commonwealth, to look to London for moral and ideological leadership.

The foundation of Britain's claim to world power status was the existence of her empire. The fact of empire would save Britain from being relegated to the status of a secondary European power in the emerging post-war world of rivalry between the two Superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. John Darwin described the 'persuasive belief' found in 'a wide cross-section of contemporary opinion',

that Britain derived her uniqueness, as well as cultural, economic and political benefits, from her maritime and imperial contacts around the world, and that her independence and even survival were bound up with their preservation.<sup>50</sup>

There was little evidence of a new, specifically Labour attitude to the empire or of a fundamental reappraisal of Britain's imperial policy and commitments after the 1945 election. The Labour government was 'unradical in its approach to foreign, defence and imperial policy'. There was no sign that the British empire was a 'white elephant' or that the Labour government was any less committed to the empire than previous governments. India was the exception rather than the rule. There was no large-scale decolonisation during the Labour administration. On the contrary there was a renewal of the colonial mission in the post-war period. The Labour

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<sup>50</sup> John Darwin, Britain and Decolonisation: the Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World, (London, 1988), p.73.

government sought to 'build a substitute for India in Africa'. 'Quitting India', therefore, 'has to be seen in the light of the simultaneous decision to push penetration deeper into tropical Africa and the Middle East'. As far as Africa was concerned, 1945 heralded the period of the 'second colonial occupation'.<sup>51</sup>

The Labour government was not the Fabian Colonial Bureau or the Labour movement in power. The new government was bound to a large extent by the decisions of its predecessor. Nor was the empire was considered in ideological isolation. As David Fieldhouse has written:

Governments are no more consistent in their behavior than other groups and only a novice historian or party apologist would expect the Attlee governments of 1945-51 to have pursued an internally coherent and ideologically predictable policy toward the British empire of colonial dependencies and the Commonwealth of sovereign states ... Attlee's ministers governed on a day to day basis: they were not a coven of philosopher-kings insulated from the exigencies of the real world.<sup>52</sup>

Even in temperament the leading members of the Labour government were not natural colonial revolutionaries. With the exception of Arthur Creech Jones, the wartime chairman of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, the Attlee government was dominated by personalities who held deep attachments to the empire.<sup>53</sup> For example, while Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister had a deeply-held commitment to Indian independence, he was also a patriot who combined 'an intellectual anti-colonialism with an emotional feeling for Britain's paternalistic role in raising the condition of lesser breeds in far-flung countries'. Ernest Bevin, the

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<sup>51</sup> ibid., pp.71-3; Jack Gallacher, The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire, (Cambridge, 1982), p.144; Crowder, op.cit., p.28.

<sup>52</sup> David Fieldhouse, 'The Labour Governments and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1945-51, in Ritchie Owendale (ed). The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments, 1945-51, (Leicester, 1984), p.83.

<sup>53</sup> Creech Jones became Secretary of State for the Colonies in October 1946. One of his officials remarked his appointment 'was rather like making a theoretical prison reformer a prison governor', quoted in Goldsworthy, op.cit., p.50.



Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was a strident nationalist and 'deeply permeated by a traditional attachment to the cult of Empire'. Herbert Morrison, the Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, revealed his imperialist outlook when he talked of the 'jolly old Empire' in 1946. Morrison was also cautious about political developments in Africa: 'to give African colonies independence would be like giving a child of 10 a latch-key, a bank account and a shotgun'.<sup>54</sup>

The Labour Party's policy towards the empire did not represent a clearly defined programme. The party's manifesto in 1945, Let Us Face the Future, contained only a one sentence commitment to 'the planned progress of our colonial dependencies'. The 1943 document passed at the party conference The Colonies: the Labour Party's Post-War Policy for the African and Pacific Colonies was consistent with coalition declarations on colonial policy and reflected Colonial Office orthodoxy. It accepted an indefinite period of British colonial rule: 'for considerable time to come these peoples will not be ready for self-government'. It contained no specific commitments or timetables for independence and dealt primarily with ways of solving the major economic, social and administrative problems of the colonies, with an emphasis on the local government.<sup>55</sup> The Labour Party embraced the theme of 'partnership' in a unanimous 1943 party conference resolution which called for the 'abolition of colonial status and the rapid realisation of genuine partnership between this country and the colonial peoples'.<sup>56</sup>

Like the wartime Coalition government, the new Labour government continued to follow a policy of gradual self-government within the Commonwealth based on the foundation

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<sup>54</sup> Morgan, op.cit., pp.146, 156 and 186; Brian Lapping, End of Empire (London, 1985), p.41.

<sup>55</sup> Labour Party, The Colonies: the Labour Party's Post-War Policy for the African and Pacific Colonies, (London, 1943).

<sup>56</sup> PRO, C0323/1858/9, Labour Party Conference Resolution 1943.

of economic and social development, 'independence eventually rather than soon'.<sup>57</sup> Or as Rita Hinden put it to a Fabian Colonial Bureau Conference in 1946:

British socialists are not so concerned with ideals like independence and self-government, but with the idea of social justice.<sup>58</sup>

The Labour government did not start with a tabula rasa.<sup>59</sup> But a notion of a specifically Labour and new programme as far as the empire was concerned still persists. For example, Ronald Hyam has implied that a break with the past occurred under Labour: 'Partnership with colonial peoples would replace trusteeship. The long-term aim was preparation for self-government which was soundly based, representative and beneficial to all'.<sup>60</sup> In fact there was little to choose between the declared policy of the Coalition government as outlined by Oliver Stanley in July 1943 and the policy outlined by the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Hall. In the first peacetime statement on colonial policy in July 1946 Hall said:

I can say without hesitation that it is our policy to develop the Colonies and all their resources so as to enable their peoples speedily and substantially to improve their economic and social conditions, and, as soon as may be practicable, to attain responsible self-government ... the idea of one people dominating or exploiting another is always repugnant. It is not domination that we seek. Nor on the other hand, is it our intention in any way to abandon peoples who have come to depend on us for their defence, security, development and welfare. To us the Colonies are a great trust, and their progress towards self-government is a goal towards which His Majesty's Government will assist them with all the means in their power. They shall go as fast as they show themselves capable of going.<sup>61</sup>

The priority would continue to be social and economic progress:

Political development is governed by social and

<sup>57</sup> ibid., p.13.

<sup>58</sup> quoted in Fieldhouse, op.cit., p.104.

<sup>59</sup> Lee and Petter, op.cit., p.249.

<sup>60</sup> R. Hyam(ed.) The Labour Government ... Part I, p.xxxi.

<sup>61</sup> Hansard, vol.425, col.238, 9 July 1946.



economic progress. It is difficult to create a democracy out of a hungry and illiterate people, and too many of the inhabitants of our Colonies have, in the past, been hungry and uneducated.<sup>62</sup>

This emphasis on economic and social development was nothing new but in the post-war period aim of the planned progress and socialisation in the colonies was to be intensified and the plans made during the war would be implemented. As with developments at home, the building of the New Jerusalem was translated into the 'post-war euphoria to reform all things into utopia' in the colonial empire.<sup>63</sup> As noted in chapter four the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 implied a new relationship between the colonies and London with new intervention by government. Under Labour the corporate state would come to Africa becoming 'an agent of modernisation'.<sup>64</sup> There was little real difference between the approaches of the coalition and the Labour governments though with the Labour government there was a greater emphasis on state intervention through public corporations and by the nationalisation of resources.

The government built on the provisions of the 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Under the 1945 Act the colonies were given 120 million pounds over a ten year period. The Colonial Office asked the colonial governments to prepare ten year development plans for their territories. The kind of projects undertaken in East and Central Africa were wide ranging. In Kenya plans were drawn up for the combatting of soil erosion; the improvement of veterinary services; the establishment of health centres; the improvement of water supplies through the Tana River scheme and tackling the housing problems of

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<sup>62</sup> ibid., col.249.

<sup>63</sup> Ronald Robinson, 'The Moral Disarmament of African Empire, 1919-1947', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 8:1 (1979), p.101.

<sup>64</sup> Larry Butler, 'The Ambiguities of British Colonial development Policy, 1938-48', in Anthony Gorst, Lewis Johnman and W. Scott Lucas (eds.), Contemporary British history, 1931-61; Politics and the Limits of Policy, (London, 1991), p.123.

urban Africans. In Tanganyika there were plans for the mining of newly discovered diamonds; a railway was to be built to Mpanda to aid the transport of lead deposits; agricultural programmes including softwood afforestation; the development of Sukumaland in lake Province where the population would be redistributed, the land improved and water supplies would be developed. In Zanzibar there were plans for the improvement of education and agriculture. In Nyasaland a new runway was to be built at Chileka airfield; research was to be undertaken into water, agriculture, soil, insecticides, malaria and yellow fever. In Northern Rhodesia plans were made for improvements in education and health, water supplies and irrigation and for rural development. In the region as a whole research would be undertaken into tsetse fly and locust control.<sup>65</sup> All this activity brought a new breed of Colonial Service officers to Africa. It was the era of the technocrats.

Lord Hailey, chairman of the Colonial Research Committee, captured the mood of the late 1940's 'development fever':

Everyone is talking of development in Africa. It is one of the slogans of the day, and I almost expected to find it featured on the London hoardings, alongside the National Savings elephant and the Guinness kangaroo.<sup>66</sup>

Development was not the priority on the imperial political agenda in the immediate post-war period. The government had to tackle the complex questions of the transfer of power in India, Ceylon and Burma, the controversies over Malaya's constitution, the future of British policy East of Suez, the Palestine Mandate and the counter-insurgency campaigns against the Jewish anti-colonial struggle. Indeed, Palestine proved to be George Hall's chief preoccupation as Secretary of State for the Colonies and took up half of Creech Jones's time when he

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<sup>65</sup> PRO, CAB21/2879, Return of schemes made under the Colonial development and Welfare Acts, by the Secretary of State for the Colonies with the concurrence of the Treasury in the period from 1 April 1946 to 31 March 1947.

<sup>66</sup> Lord Hailey, 'The Foundation of Self-Government in the African Colonies', African Affairs, 47:188, (1948), p.149.



took over in October 1946.<sup>67</sup>

Paradoxically problems in other parts of the British empire only served to highlight the importance of British Africa where there would be no imperial retreat. As Frederick Pedler wrote in 1946:

Africa is now the core of colonial position, the only continental space from which we can still hope to draw reserves of economic and military strength. Our position there depends fundamentally on our standing with Africans in the mass.<sup>68</sup>

In order to maintain British interests in Africa as part of Britain's larger imperial interests the Labour government had to retain the cooperation and friendship of the colonies in an active imperial partnership. Andrew Cohen noted, 'we are in fact at the end of the period during which we could rely on the white man's prestige to govern Africa'.<sup>69</sup> But no one was under any illusions that the task ahead would be easy. It was not enough to have altruistic ideals:

We may start with the best intentions in the world but find our intentions are misunderstood and grossly misrepresented by the people to whom they are designed to bring advantage. It is of the greatest importance that those intentions are understood by the people for whom this work is being done.<sup>70</sup>

In a debate on Colonial Affairs in the House of Commons on July 1947 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, outlined his attitude towards the relationship between public relations and colonial policy. He made it clear that the success of the government's policy was dependent on the ability of the government to persuade rather than coerce the peoples of the colonial empire to support government policy:

colonial progress is not a matter merely of directives

<sup>67</sup> Goldsworthy, op.cit., p.15; Fieldhouse, op.cit., p.87.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in John W. Cell, 'On the Eve of Decolonisation: the Colonial Office's Plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1947', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 7:3, (1980), p.240-1.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in ibid., p.238.

<sup>70</sup> Arthur Creech Jones, 'Our African Territories', African Affairs, 45:180 (1946), p.130.

from the Colonial Office or the Government of the day. We have to get implemented in our territories our principles and policies, it is true, but, at the same time, in all our efforts, we have to remember that our territories are advancing to some degree of responsible self-government, and, accordingly, we cannot impose our will. We have to persuade them to build up their own institutions with the acceptance of the sound policies which we feel will make for the betterment of the colonial territories. If the Colonial Office is to perform its important services, it is essential that it should have the requisite knowledge for the work in hand, and our object is to transform the dependencies to responsibility, and to exercise a trust so that each blossoms into a partnership of disinterested service and friendship. We try to give what practical aid we can in achieving the social happiness and well-being of the colonial peoples to make their contribution to the larger life of mankind ... In Britain, we have reorganised our public relations department in order that a better service of information may be made available to the British public and to foreign States, and also that contributions may be made in regard to the relations in the colonial territories themselves.<sup>71</sup>

And as David Rees-Williams, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State put it: '"Theirs not to reason why" went out with Tennyson'.<sup>72</sup>

Until the 1947 reorganisation of public relations under the direction of the new head of the Information Department, Kenneth Blackburne there was little evidence of any new initiatives in public relations in the Colonial Office. Indeed, business continued as usual with the Colonial Office providing the policy guidance for the Empire Information Service and the producer divisions of the MOI and its successor the COI. Colonial publicity continued on the lines established during the war, 'partnership' remained the central theme of imperial propaganda. Those responsible for colonial propaganda remained the same until 1947. Noel Sabine continued as head of the Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office and Vincent Harlow continued as head of the Empire Information Service.

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<sup>71</sup> Hansard, vol.441, cols. 264-5, 29 July 1947. emphasis added.

<sup>72</sup> PRO, CO875/23/1, report by Rees-Williams on a visit to West Africa, 1948.



The Empire Information Service continued educating British public opinion by organising public lectures on the colonies. In October 1945 the Service ran a course for teachers in Portsmouth with lectures given by Sir Bernard Bourdillon on 'the British Empire and its Problems' and Vincent Harlow on 'Britain, the Colonies and the World'.<sup>73</sup> Printed material continued to be produced including Josephine Kamm's African Challenge which told the story of British tropical Africa from the beginnings to the present 'political, social and economic work now in hand and its importance for the future of Africa'. A leaflet about David Livingstone described his life and achievements. 'War notes' were prepared for the BIS in the United States on subjects like East African pyrethrum production and political progress in African dependencies. Additions to the series 'A Day in the Life ...' were made.<sup>74</sup> Picture sets were received from East Africa and included the sisal industry in Uganda. These sets were distributed to the national press. The Films Division of the MOI completed Know Your Commonwealth - Southern Rhodesia and Know Your Commonwealth - East Africa. The Division also produced a film about tea in East Africa. The successor to the wartime British Overseas Wireless, the London Press Service, carried items of colonial news around the world.<sup>75</sup> Liaison was maintained between the Colonial Office and the COI's Reference Division and a weekly news bulletin, Colonial News was produced. The Information Officers in the colonies were asked to provide a continuous supply of local material. This local material would illustrate 'the progress of colonial development and welfare and the

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<sup>73</sup> PRO, C0875/21/1, Empire Information Service progress report, 1 July 1945 - 31 October 1945. Between June and September 1945 the MOI organised 150 meetings on the colonies out of a total of 362 public meetings.

<sup>74</sup> ibid.

<sup>75</sup> PRO, C0875/21/1, Frost to Sabine, 2 July 1946.

implementation of British colonial policy'.<sup>76</sup> The colonial governments were asked to aid the fight against 'apathy' about the colonial empire. They were asked to provide up to date information about the practical benefits of the imperial partnership, in particular about local development projects, for inclusion in the Colonial Office's annual report to Parliament. As in pre-war days this report would be available both to MPs and to the public. These annual reports would also be sent to the United Nations and the colonial governments were asked to bear in mind the 'international' audience in the compilation of their reports, although this did not mean that reports should be censored to appeal to international opinion.<sup>77</sup> Creech Jones argued optimistically that the government should not be afraid of the principle of international accountability, as it would 'be particularly stupid of us to appear grudging and reticent particularly when we have such a good story to tell'.<sup>78</sup>

Continuity is also apparent in public and parliamentary statements. 'Partnership' continued to be the theme of colonial policy and commitments to timetables for independence continued to be avoided. Creech Jones used the 'partnership' model in a speech to the House of Commons outlining Labour's colonial policy:

What are the assumptions in the Labour policy? What is the approach of Labour Ministers to particular problems? We start on certain assumptions ... First we say that discrimination and racial superiority must be made to disappear as quickly as possible, and that the relationship between this country and the Colonial peoples should be a relationship of partnership, the responsibility of Britain being to give the colonial peoples all the aid and assistance and technical skill that we can afford, to help them forward in their development. Further, the assumption is that political

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<sup>76</sup> PRO, C0875/21/1, minutes of a meeting between the Colonial Office and the Reference Division and the Empire Information Service of the COI, 14 August 1946; Heald to Evans, 4 September 1946.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, C0875/21/2, circular despatch to all colonies, 12 November 1946; circular despatch to all colonies, 9 December 1946.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, C0875/29/1, minute by Creech Jones, 16 July 1946.



and economic privilege and domination shall go, and that in its place there shall be political freedom which leads to responsible self government. The third assumption is that economic exploitation of natural resources and people in the interests of groups whether internal or external, would go, and it is our responsibility, therefore to drop the ideas of economic imperialism.<sup>79</sup>

It would be wrong to suggest that the colonial policy of the post-war Labour government lacked any initiative. In 1947 the Colonial Office devised a political strategy for Africa. The political instrument of partnership would be African participation in the administration, with the encouragement of 'Africanisation' of the Colonial Service and in government, at the local level. The development of local government would be hastened so that the political education of Africans would be undertaken simultaneously with developments in the economic and social fields. The impact of the unprecedented economic and social development of the colonies planned during the war therefore would be channeled positively into the task of nation-building, rather than allowed to fester and transform into political opposition.

As we saw in chapter four the policy of trusteeship was abandoned in 1943 and replaced with 'partnership'. The ultimate goal of colonial policy was self-government within the Commonwealth. From mid-1943 onwards British propaganda explained how the partnership would work to create viable units in the colonies in economic and social spheres through the implementation of development and welfare policies. For these policies to be successful colonial participation was crucial. But who these 'partners' would be was left vague, perhaps deliberately and pragmatically so. There were the traditional rulers who led the Native Authorities but it was difficult to see how these feudal chieftains could be incorporated into the machinery of a modern state as they did not necessarily represent vehicles for progress but rather reaction. However there was little evidence of an emerging political class among the African populations which could command the support of the masses.

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<sup>79</sup> Hansard, vol.425, col.344, 9 July 1946.

Lord Hailey had found during a wartime tour of British Africa that political consciousness was on the rise but nothing which resembled 'mature' mass nationalism.<sup>80</sup> The Colonial Office was content to encourage cooperation between the tribal and educated elites and 'saw no reason to make any irrevocable choice between them'.<sup>81</sup>

For the British government in East and Central Africa the choice of partners was even wider and problematic. It was not merely a choice between traditional ruling elites and the newer politicised, educated cadres, as was broadly the case in West Africa. During the war the contributions of the white settler communities to the war effort had made them vocal and powerful 'partners' of the British government. As we saw in chapter six it was the white settler communities who were the most politically mature in East and Central Africa and it was they who clamoured for self-government. But an exclusively white settler-London 'partnership' was totally unacceptable to London, not least because it would have contradicted the policy of African paramountcy. This was obviously an explosive situation. The British government was in danger of losing the initiative through a policy of inaction on political issues. Unless action was taken in the political field 'partnership' would be pure rhetoric - propaganda without substance. It became increasingly clear that 'without the active support of Africans' the development plans would fail as the 'framework for the collaboration between colonial rulers and local elites no longer met modern requirements'.<sup>82</sup>

Under the leadership of Creech Jones the Colonial Office sought to address these unresolved questions. The Colonial Office and the colonial governments would equip themselves for the new role of development instead of pure administration. It was recognised that the development

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<sup>80</sup> Cell, Hailey ..., p.244.

<sup>81</sup> Pearce, 'The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonization ...', p.83.

<sup>82</sup> Cell, 'On the Eve of Decolonisation ...', p.235; Butler, p.121.



policies would have political consequences and it was important that political viability received the same kind of attention as economic and social viability. The notion of watching the Africans for cues and gradually evolving the traditional institutions into local government was abandoned. While the end point was the same - self-government within the Commonwealth - formal empire was to be ended constructively.

The development of African nationalism would not to be resisted. The aim was to be active in the creation of self-governing states, which would be broadly based, viable in economic, social and political terms, friendly, non-communist and firmly within the Commonwealth framework. Instead of reacting to events, the Colonial Office was anxious to seize the initiative in political developments in Africa by producing a programme of practical policies. 'Decolonisation was not mentioned', instead the Colonial Office 'planned in magisterial fashion the gradual devolution of self-government within the Commonwealth'.<sup>83</sup> This strategy was embodied in the Local Government Despatch of February 1947. The aim was responsible government within a generation in West Africa. Elsewhere progress would be 'considerably slower'.<sup>84</sup> This would be achieved in four stages of increasing African participation in government from the local level, through elections based on universal franchises to the final stage of African ministers representing the majority party would form the government on a Westminster model.<sup>85</sup> At the root of the strategy to prepare the African colonies for responsible government was progress at the local level. Local government would be democratised. This would, it was hoped, avoid the creation of a new class of professional African politicians who were out of touch with the mass of

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<sup>83</sup> Porter and Stockwell, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>84</sup> Cell, 'On the Eve of Decolonisation ...', p.246.

<sup>85</sup> Ronald Robinson, 'Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1940-1951', in W.H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fischer (eds.), Decolonisation and After: the British and French Experience, (London, 1980), p.63.

the people. The Colonial Office hoped to see a way out of a possible dilemma of either holding on too long or making premature concessions. Political progress would be determined by the strength of nationalist feeling. The ability of the nationalists were able to insist on change would depend on 'the degree to which they had achieved mass support'.<sup>86</sup>

It would be wrong to see the plan for the development of Local Government either as an inflexible blueprint or even a revolutionary policy change. The pace of development would depend on local conditions. As Ronald Robinson\*, who with Andrew Cohen drew up the scheme for Local Government later described it:

It was entirely within the terms of seeking to reconcile what's been called the ethos (I would call it habit of mind) of the Colonial Office over many years, the notion of slow and stately progress towards self-government, and the fact that this was usually brought about by pragmatic responses to events, usually those in the territories. What it sought to do was to break away from leaving this process entirely to an outburst at the other end before anyone thought about doing anything. It sought to set, no doubt very naively, a kind of programmed form of pragmatic reactions, and there was no proposal in it which hadn't already been carried out somewhere in some part of the colonial empire. It represented an attempt to systemise possible pragmatic responses to what was conceived as a variety of situations.<sup>87</sup>

The Local Government strategy therefore sought to put some meat on the bones of political 'partnership'. In East and Central Africa political rhetoric of self-government would be pursued in deed. The aim would be to improve the status and experience of Africans leading to participation in 'genuine partnership'.<sup>88</sup> Self-government would have to wait until the African majority was ready to play a full part with the settler communities. Here it can also be seen that the Labour government accepted that the white settlers had an essential role to play in the development

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<sup>86</sup> Pearce, 'The Colonial Office ...', p.86.

<sup>87</sup> Nicholas Owen (ed.) 'Decolonisation and the Colonial Office: a Witness Seminar,' Contemporary Record, 6:3, Winter 1992, pp. 515-6.

<sup>88</sup> Hyam, 'Africa and the Labour Government ...', p.156.



of territories in East and Central Africa.

However these plans were not received with enthusiasm when they were presented to a meeting of the African governors which met in London in November 1947 to discuss the implementation of the Local Government Despatch. The governors would only endorse the local government policy as a general statement and would not commit themselves to specific points of detail. The differences between conditions in the regions of British Africa were highlighted. The East African governors insisted that the political future of Africa had to be considered on a regional basis; 'the "black man's countries" of West Africa and the "plural societies" of East and Central Africa had essentially different problems and were going to progress along very different timetables'.<sup>89</sup>

The education of the African in the art of government proceeded in any case, but at a leisurely pace and without the recognition that the foundations of this education should be at the local government level. While there were examples of progress at the local and district levels, particularly in the early 1950s, they were often seen as an 'alternative' to political developments at the centre and not as a preparation for them.<sup>90</sup>

The reluctance of the governors in East and Central Africa to adopt a central and pro-active role in the development of local democracy in their territories came at the same time as the economic crisis which began in the summer of 1947. Radical and rapid approaches to the transfer of power were put on one side. The economic crisis of balance of payments difficulties and the convertibility of the pound led the government to reassess its commitments in Africa. The answer was not an imperial retreat, but rather a decision to use the economies of the colonies. The colonies would prop up Britain's position in order to aid economic recovery by integrating colonial development into domestic economic planning. This new

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<sup>89</sup> Cell, 'On the Eve ...', pp.255-6.

<sup>90</sup> C.f. Pearce, op.cit., pp.195-202.

emphasis on economic 'partnership' between Britain and her colonies in Africa dominated, social and political partnership were eclipsed. The economic crisis did not prompt the process of decolonisation or the abandonment of development schemes in Africa as a cost-cutting measure. Instead the economic crisis gave impetus to the colonial solution of Britain's economic difficulties and the development of tangible resources:

Attlee's Cabinet succumbed like no other before it, to the legendary attraction of the colonies, and especially Africa, as an 'El Dorado', possessing vast untapped wealth which offered an escape route from Britain's problems.<sup>91</sup>

The colonies were seen as an asset in strengthening the sterling area by continuing to build up their currency reserves in London. The colonies were asked to limit their dollar expenditure and to curb imports from the sterling area so that products could be released and sold in the dollar market. The colonies were also asked to increase their production of goods bought from the dollar area and to increase the production of goods which were dollar earners.<sup>92</sup> African resources were developed as dollar earners, in particular the chrome, coal and copper of Central Africa.

The Colonial Office, however was less enthusiastic about the economic advantages afforded by the intensification of development in Africa. The development ethos was corrupted. The aim of Colonial Office development plans was to create a viable economic unit with the mixed economy that implied and not solely the encouragement of primary production in British interests producing material to earn and save dollars. The Colonial Office tried to explain that government expectations were unrealistic and were based on ignorance of local conditions, particularly the state of the infra-structure in Africa. However a combination of Creech Jones's lack of power and the relative isolation of the Colonial Office within Whitehall prevented it from defending its policy

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<sup>91</sup> Butler, op.cit., p.124.

<sup>92</sup> ibid., p.125.



goals.<sup>93</sup> Instead the Attlee Cabinet proposed new legislation. In 1948 the Overseas Resources Act was passed which created the Colonial Development Corporation and the Overseas Food Corporation which led to the most infamous development project of the Attlee government in Africa, the Groundnuts scheme in Tanganyika.<sup>94</sup>

The Secretary of the Cabinet, Norman Brook, thought it necessary to draw attention to the political implications of this 'development' policy:

I wonder whether Ministers have considered sufficiently the difficulties of defending this policy against criticisms and misrepresentations, which it may provoke? It could, I suppose, be said to fall within the ordinary definition of 'Imperialism'. And, at the level of political broadcast it might be represented as a policy of exploiting native peoples in order to support the standard of living of workers in this country.<sup>95</sup>

In spite of Brook's warning, it is particularly striking that there was an apparent lack of concern that a paradox existed 'in the contrast between the benevolent rhetoric of economic development and the reality of economic exploitation'.<sup>96</sup> To the Attlee government, the recovery of the British economy took precedence over colonial development. Moreover, in considering the colonies,

Labour governments after 1945 genuinely saw no inconsistency between their stated intention to develop them for their own good. Even if it was necessary to exploit the colonies in the short-term, their long-term welfare depended on and would be ensured by a prosperous socialist Britain ... Between 1945 and 1951 a good socialist case could be made out of forcing the colonies for a few years, to help feed the goose that would eventually lay them golden eggs.<sup>97</sup>

But as we will see the disasters of the super-exploitation

<sup>93</sup> Butler, op.cit., p.133.

<sup>94</sup> C.f. PRO, CAB128/6, C.M.(46)93, 31 October 1946 for discussion of the groundnut scheme and CAB128/10, C.M.(47)53, 10 June 1947 for discussion of the development of colonial resources.

<sup>95</sup> PRO, CAB21/1690, Brook to Attlee, 1 January 1948.

<sup>96</sup> Fieldhouse, op.cit., p.95.

<sup>97</sup> ibid., pp.101 and 102.

development policy symbolised in the failure of the Groundnuts project called into question British claims to be a partner in African progress.

Africa also assumed greater importance in Britain's defence strategy. British Africa would become a major support area, providing manpower and raw materials for the Middle Eastern theatre. Africans would compensate for the loss of the Indian Army. The development of a strategic base in Kenya was discussed as East Africa was 'expected to be more important in a future war as a result of greater weapon ranges and weakening of Britain's position in the Middle East', becoming a 'major training base and storage depot' and to defend the main support area in South Africa. Although the ambitious plans for the strategic development of East Africa proved to be too expensive to be realised the development of the Kenya base remained desirable but not essential.<sup>98</sup>

As the Cold War intensified Africa was perceived to be vulnerable to Soviet penetration. Bevin feared that the Russians 'would sooner or later make a major drive against our position in Africa'.<sup>99</sup> Bevin, however, was not prepared to see a reduction in Britain's power as a result of the Cold War, instead he wanted to create a British-led 'spiritual union of the West', a 'Third Force' as an alternative to the division of the world into two rival blocs,

Provided that we can organise a Western European system ... backed by the resources of the Commonwealth and the Americas, it should be possible to develop our power and influence to equal that of the United States of America and the USSR. We have the material resources in the Colonial Empire, if we develop them, and by giving a spiritual lead now we should be able to carry out our task in a way which will show clearly that we are not subservient to the United States or to

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<sup>98</sup> Ronald Hyam, 'Africa and the Labour Government, 1945-1951', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth history, vol.XIX, no.3, May 1988, p.159.

<sup>99</sup> ibid., p.149.



the Soviet Union.<sup>100</sup>

As part of creating a 'Third Force' Bevin hoped to organise 'the middle of the planet'. In this organisation the resources of the colonies in Africa would be vital for the success of Bevin's overall global strategy and essential to secure Britain's independence in the world. If Britain

only pushed on and developed Africa, we could have the United States dependent on us and eating out of our hands in four or five years ... the United States is very barren of essential minerals and in Africa we have them all.<sup>101</sup>

The colonies also needed to be protected against communist incursions. In 1948 the Foreign Office took the initiative and established a new propaganda department, the Information Research Department to fight the Cold War. It had three functions:

1. an offensive branch attacking and exposing Communist methods and policy and contrasting them with 'Western' democracy and British methods and policy;
2. a defensive branch, which would be concerned with replying to Soviet and Communist attacks and hostile propaganda;
3. a positive branch which would deal with the 'build-up' of the Western union conception.<sup>102</sup>

This organisation was supplemented by the establishment in July 1948 of the Colonial Information Policy Committee which co-ordinated anti-communist propaganda in Britain's colonial possessions. This committee was chaired by Christopher Mayhew, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, and was attended by the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State of the Foreign, Colonial and

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<sup>100</sup> PRO, FO371/71648/N134, meeting at the Foreign Office, 30 December 1947; 'The First Aim of British Foreign Policy', PRO, CAB129/23,C.P.(48)6, 4 January 1948.

<sup>101</sup> John Kent, 'The British Empire and the Origins of the Cold War', in Anne Deighton (ed.) Britain and the First Cold War (London, 1990), p.179.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, FO371/71687/N765, meeting of the Russia Committee, 15 January 1948. For a more detailed examination of the Information Research Department and British anti-communist propaganda c.f., W.Scott Lucas and C.J. Morris, 'A Very British Crusade: the Information Research Department and the Beginning of the Cold War', in Richard J. Aldrich (ed.), British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War, 1945-51, (London, 1992), pp.85-110.

Commonwealth Relations Offices, a representative of the COI and General Sir Ian Jacob of the BBC. Its existence was secret even from other departments in Whitehall.<sup>103</sup>

In the Colonial Office the Public Relations Department (renamed the Information Department) was re-organised by the new Director of Information, Kenneth Blackburne. Blackburne was appointed in May 1947. From the outset he had one big advantage over Noel Sabine, his predecessor because he was 'someone of good reputation within the official hierarchy'.<sup>104</sup> Sabine had been a District Commissioner when he was transferred to the Colonial Office from Kenya. Blackburne not only had a wider experience in Nigeria, Palestine and the West Indies but was also more senior having been the Colonial Secretary in the Gambia (he was the youngest ever appointment to the position of Colonial Secretary). His rank and reputation within the Colonial Service meant that he was better placed than Sabine to have the views of the Information Department heard and acted upon. His appointment coincided with the intensification of development of the colonies which would have to be explained in the colonies as never before. Therefore it was important that he headed a department which was equipped to fulfill this task.

Only one month into the job Blackburne produced a survey of the activities of the Information Department and future requirements. He considered that re-organisation was necessary because of a feeling in the Department 'that we do not know what we are working for nor where we are going'. Blackburne saw the fundamental purpose of the Information Department as building friendship between the people of the colonies and the people of Britain:

to assist in the maintenance of a powerful British Commonwealth of Nations in the interests of its own peoples and of the world as a whole; and I suggest that the Department has a vital part to play in this

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<sup>103</sup> PRO, CAB130/37, GEN231/4, 'Anti-Soviet and pro-British Colonial Propaganda', 16 June 1948; PRO, C0537/5130, Morgan to Keith, 12 October 1949. The papers of the committee are retained in PRO, CAB21/1691-1693.

<sup>104</sup> Kenneth Blackburne, Lasting Legacy: a Story of British Colonialism (London, 1976), p.93.



connection. In the past the British Commonwealth has been built up and maintained by the strength of Great Britain, by political control exercised from this country, by economic ties, and by strategic requirements in the interests of defence. The steady progress towards self-government in the Colonies and the pressure continually being exerted on His Majesty's government to lessen the economic ties between the United Kingdom and the Colonies, the difficult financial position of the United Kingdom, and the development of atomic power and aerial warfare - all are tending to weaken the political, economic and strategic ties between the United Kingdom and the Colonies. There is only one certain link left - friendship between the people of the United Kingdom and people of the Colonies - and I suggest that the fundamental and vital aim of the Information department is to foster the growth of that friendship.<sup>105</sup>

The Information Department, he argued, was not equipped to carry out this task and he envisioned substantial increases in staff.

The first objective of the Department was the 'Projection of Britain'. The territorial Information Officers were not equipped to undertake this task as their primary role was the interpretation of territorial policy. Blackburne would encourage visits from the colonies and visitors to the colonies, Trades Union officials, MPs and the Press as 'ambassadors for Britain. In relations between the Colonial Office and the COI, the Colonial Office should take the initiative in making publicity suggestions in order to end the 'haphazard' method of planning.<sup>106</sup>

The second objective of projecting the colonies in the United Kingdom should be intensified. The Colonial Office should hold a monthly press conference. He wanted to see the transfer of the COI's Empire Information Service to the Colonial Office because the existing relationship was unsatisfactory. The third objective of projecting the colonies to the world should also be intensified. The Foreign Office should encourage foreign consuls to visit the Colonial Office. The British Council should be used

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<sup>105</sup> PRO, C0875/42/6, Blackburne to Jeffries, 11 June 1947.

<sup>106</sup> ibid.

more and the Information Department should be more active in the activities of the COI in this area because the Colonial Office seemed to be 'more a censor than a driving force'.<sup>107</sup>

Above all, Blackburne thought the Colonial Office needed to seize the initiative and plan long-range publicity. He wanted the Information Department to be split into two sections. A News and Publications Department would be a functional department concerned with 'creative' work and departmental public relations. It would have four branches: press, information and reference, editorial and publications. An Information Services Department would be concerned with work towards long-term objectives and would consist of four branches, the projection of Britain to the colonies, the projection of the colonies to the United Kingdom, the presentation of British colonial policy to the world and broadcasting.<sup>108</sup>

Blackburne's proposals were welcomed in the Colonial Office. Jeffries found his survey 'able and practical' and supported his general proposals. Sir Thomas Lloyd, the newly promoted Under-Secretary of State thought it was an 'admirable piece of work' and 'agreed throughout' with Blackburne's plans for the future. The only problem he foresaw was obtaining Treasury agreement for staff expansion. Creech Jones commented, 'I agree with the recommendations and hope the Treasury can be persuaded. I hope the programme can be carried out. A good paper'.<sup>109</sup>

The following month Blackburne called for a policy statement on the public relations work as 'not only we in the Colonial Office but those who are handling public relations work overseas are inclined to be in the dark as to our true objectives'. Such a statement would have the secondary purpose of enabling the Colonial Office to 'tackle' governments in the colonies which had not

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<sup>107</sup> ibid.

<sup>108</sup> ibid.

<sup>109</sup> PRO, C0875/42/6, minutes by Jeffries, 11 June 1947; Lloyd, 17 June 1947 and Creech Jones, 24 June 1947.



appointed full time information officers.<sup>110</sup> An old critic Sydney Caine, objected. He could not grasp the need for publicity 'specialists'. Every officer, he argued, should take into account 'the public aspects of his work, being prepared when necessary to explain to an interested public what he is doing and why'. Caine was overruled by the Secretary of State for the Colonies who ordered that a despatch should be sent 'without delay' and expressed surprise that this had not been done already.<sup>111</sup>

The circular despatch left the colonial governors in no doubt of the importance Creech Jones attached to propaganda. He was anxious to 'see greater attention paid to information and public relations work both at home and in the colonies'. A memorandum on public relations work in the colonies was enclosed. The memorandum explained the meaning of public relations and how the term had been 'coined' in recent years to 'dissociate genuine public relations work from the stigma attached to "propaganda" and "publicity"'. Public relations was 'as old as history' and was the 'art of establishing and maintaining within a community a spirit of fellowship based on mutual understanding and trust'. Indeed, 'public relations may in fact be the whole art of politics'. The particular public relations objective of the colonial governments 'is to develop a closer association between the people of the Colony and the local government, so as to make the people accept the government as "their" government'. Political reform on its own was not enough:

Much can be done, and much is being done, by the grant of broader constitutions, by the development of local government, and by the appointment of local officers to senior posts in the government service. But these measures alone are not enough. The people of each colony have to be brought to realise that the grant of a new constitution, the development of a new system of local government, and the appointment of local officers to senior posts do in fact mean that they are becoming increasingly responsible for their own affairs and that the Colonial government is 'their'

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<sup>110</sup> PRO, C0875/23/1, Blackburne to Jeffries, 16 July 1947.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, C0875/23/1, minute by Caine, 18 August 1947 and minute by Creech Jones, undated.

government. It is here that a positive public relations policy is needed, and such a policy can only be introduced if every senior government officer realises that he has a responsibility in the execution of this policy - that he is in fact a public relations officer for his government.<sup>112</sup>

Public relations could also play a particular role in Africa in the area of race relations by supporting the new empire of 'partnership':

It is fruitless for a government whose senior officers are of European descent to accept as an aim of policy the development of closer association between the people and the government unless steps are taken to break down the barriers caused by racial misunderstanding. It is fruitless for the Secretary of State to declare that a policy of 'partnership' is replacing the policy of 'trusteeship' unless government officials in the colonies are prepared to accept the colonial peoples as partners in fact as well as in name.<sup>113</sup>

Treasury assent for the reorganisation of the Colonial Office's Information Department was received at the end of September; Blackburne received finance for the adoption of his proposals in full. The Information Department would now be equipped to continue day to day work while at the same time be able to plan long range policies.<sup>114</sup>

In November 1947 the African governors gathered in London to attend a conference on the future of British colonial policy in Africa. The economic implications of the government's new drive to utilise colonial resources to aid Britain in the economic crisis were discussed. As we have seen above the conference also discussed the political future of Africa centred on the development of local government which had formed the substance of Creech Jones' Local Government Despatch of February 1947.

While the Colonial Office's plans for local government received a lukewarm response, the governors endorsed the proposals for the development of public relations outlined in Creech Jones' circular despatch of September 1947.

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<sup>112</sup> PRO, C0875/23/1, circular despatch to all colonies, 17 September 1947.

<sup>113</sup> ibid.

<sup>114</sup> PRO, C0875/23/1, circular despatch to all colonies, 1 October 1947.



Creech Jones, expressed his concern to the governors about the 'appalling ignorance' in the United Kingdom about the colonies. He insisted that 'a great effort was wanted if we were to get the people of this country keyed up and interested in what was happening in the Colonies'. In the colonies themselves public relations was of 'immense importance' to secure 'goodwill and cooperation'. The governor of Kenya, Sir Philip Mitchell, agreed and stated that an active public relations policy had the full backing of the government of Kenya; 'in such a colony as Kenya public relations and race relations were the same thing'.<sup>115</sup>

In order to maintain the momentum for a positive public relations policy, another circular despatch was sent to the colonies, emphasising the importance of public relations as 'an integral part of modern administration'. The work of information departments was not to 'bamboozle' the public, but the reverse:

British policy in the field of information has always been based on the belief that the public should know the truth at the earliest possible moment, for the progress of a country will obviously suffer if ignorance and mistrust develop through the failure of the government to take the public into its confidence.

The people of the colonies 'should understand Britain's difficulties and achievements'. Ignorance of government intentions should be dispelled; 'the key to ignorance is understanding, the key to understanding is knowledge, and the key to knowledge is the supply of information'.<sup>116</sup>

In October 1948 the Colonial Office Information Department was re-organised to reflect the decision to adopt an offensive anti-communist propaganda campaign. The organisation of the Information Department remained unchanged throughout the 1950's. A fourth Cold War objective was added to the terms of reference of the Department's activities in addition to the projection of Britain to the colonies, the projection of the colonies to

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<sup>115</sup> PRO, CO875/23/1, Conference of African Governors, minutes of meeting held on 19 November 1947.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, CO875/23/1, circular despatch to all colonies, 15 July 1948.

the United Kingdom and the projection of the colonies to the world to carry out the programme established by the Colonial Information Policy Committee. Anti-communist propaganda had become necessary because of the 'alarming spread of Communism in the world' and 'Soviet attacks on British colonialism'. In this area the Information Department departed from purely long-term educative propaganda. In order to counter

the immediate Communist menace, we must undertake positive and dynamic propaganda. We must not confine ourselves to the production of material of an informative nature designed to promote friendship between the people of Britain and the people of the Colonies; we must also undertake definite short-term propaganda - 'destructive' propaganda to show to the peoples of the Colonies the evils of Communism; 'constructive' propaganda to undermine Soviet propaganda and to show to the people of the Colonies and of the world the advantage of the British way of life and of British colonial policy as contrasted with the shortcomings of Communism; and 'defensive and explanatory' propaganda designed to explain to the colonial peoples why the British Government has followed various lines of action which provoke criticism in the Colonies.<sup>117</sup>

The Information Department was re-organised to meet the new objective. The Information Services Branch would be concerned with long-term information work with five sections, the projection of the colonies to Britain, the projection of Britain to the colonies, the projection of the colonies to foreign countries, including work related to the British Council, broadcasting, and the development of public relations in the colonies. The News Branch was responsible with day to day work of the Information Department and was divided into two sections, the press and reference sections. The Publications Branch was responsible for the preparation of all official printed material.<sup>118</sup>

The Colonial Film Unit continued to provide films for African audiences and in 1947 it took over the role of the COI's films division by producing films projecting the

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<sup>117</sup> PRO, CO875/42/7, memorandum by Blackburne on the work and policy of the Information Department, 16 October 1948.

<sup>118</sup> ibid.



colonies to Britain in addition to its functions of projecting Britain to the colonies and producing educational films. In 1947-48 the Colonial Film Unit sent two units to East Africa which filmed material for the production of Introducing East Africa, The Groundnut Survey, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Nairobi.<sup>119</sup> The Colonial Film Unit was to continue until the colonies established their own film units. In 1948 the Central African Council obtained Colonial Development and Welfare funding for a Central African Film Unit which in its first year produced Mulenza Goes to Town, Mujenji Builds a Bridge and a film about soil erosion.<sup>120</sup> The British Council extended its work in Africa and by the end of 1948 it had established an office in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam while exploring the possibilities of opening Institutes in the other East and Central African territories.<sup>121</sup>

In Africa the territorial Information Officers continued to be linked through the office of the PIO which became the Regional Information Office in 1947 until its closure in 1950. The main objective of the RIO was to provide publicity material to illustrate the practical benefits of 'partnership', developments and progress in the colonies like the groundnuts scheme, the mining industries in Central Africa, and projects to combat soil erosion in order to show Britain and the world that 'our colonial policy and administration is good'.<sup>122</sup> The RIO continued to supervise the East African Photograph Unit and in 1948 it produced photographs on subjects as varied as the Williamson Mwadui Diamond Mines in Tanganyika, the Kariba

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<sup>119</sup> PRO, C0875/26/1, the Colonial Film Unit's programme, 2 September 1947; Colonial Film Unit Committee meeting, 5 August 1948.

<sup>120</sup> PRO, C0875/25/3, meeting of the Colonial Welfare and Development committee, 12 February 1948; Izod to Blackburne, 16 November 1948.

<sup>121</sup> PRO, C0875/45/1, Mitchell to Cohen, 30 June 1948; PRO, C0875/46/3, Tanganyika to Colonial Office, 23 November 1948; PRO, C0875/47/1, report by Blackburne, 26 May 1949.

<sup>122</sup> PRO, C0875/23/3, Northcote to Wathen, 24 March 1947; Blackburne to Watkins-Pitchford, 26 February 1948.

Dam Hydro-Electric Scheme in Uganda and over a thousand photographs on the groundnuts project alone.<sup>123</sup>

East African Groundnuts was the development project which attracted the most government and public attention. In its inception, presentation and ultimate failure we can see the collision of Colonial Office good intentions and British economic requirements. It is hard to see how any amount of propaganda and public relations could succeed in continuing to support 'partnership' when the policy pursued by the Labour government was driven by Britain's economic considerations.

The Groundnuts project was of course only one of the many projects which was the result of the legislation which created the Colonial Development Corporation and the Overseas Food Corporation in 1947. It is perhaps ironic that the idea of a development corporation, in theory free from the taint of exploitation attached to private enterprise<sup>124</sup> became identified with socialist state capitalism. As originally conceived the Colonial Development Corporation was to increase colonial output and to save dollars. It had nine commercial operating divisions: equipment and supply, animal products, crops, forestry, fisheries, minerals, engineering and works, factories and marketing and hotels. However it soon dropped many of its original divisions and concentrated on food production for the United Kingdom. The CDC had its own failures and incurred big losses like the Gambia Poultry Farm which precipitated the resignation of Lord Trefgarne, the chairman of the CDC. Other projects like the production of Tung oil in Nyasaland which began in 1948 were economically viable but took years before it came out of the red (in this case not until 1962, only two years before Nyasaland gained independence as Malawi) and was hardly a remedy for the economic crisis of 1947/8.<sup>125</sup> The

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<sup>123</sup> PRO, C0875/23/4, Watkins-Pitchford to Blackburne, 8 July 1948.

<sup>124</sup> Butler, op.cit., p.130.

<sup>125</sup> Havinden and Meredith, op.cit., pp. 283-94.



activities of the CDC also provided ammunition for critics both of British colonial policy and increased state economic intervention. It was described by the pan-Africanist George Padmore as:

a system of State Capitalism, operated on behalf of the Labour Government by salaried executives working for a semi-official Corporation rather than for shareholders. This constitutes a new form of Economic Imperialism.<sup>126</sup>

In the beginning at least East African Groundnuts symbolised hopes for British economic recovery, faith in socialist planning and the development of Africa. In the post-war period there was an urgent shortage of oil and fats. The British government hoped to reduce its dependence on imported vegetable fats which cost valuable dollars and develop its own sources of supply. The project intended to be a 'revolution in economic development under tropical conditions' with the largest amount of groundnuts produced in the shortest possible period of time. The idea originated with Frank Samuel, the managing director of the United Africa Company, a subsidiary of Unilever. The UAC in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture in Tanganyika drew up a plan which was presented to the Ministry of Food in March 1946. Further investigations by the Wakefield Committee produced a plan which envisioned the clearing and planting of 107 farming units with a total acreage of 3,210,000 in three colonies, Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia over a five year period. It was hoped that 600,000 tons of groundnuts would be produced each year up to year five, and 800,000 tons per annum thereafter. The project would cost 24 million pounds and produce an annual saving of 10 million pounds on the food import bill. In December 1946 the plan was presented as a White Paper with the recommendation that work should begin immediately in Tanganyika with the aim of clearing 150,000 acres by the end of 1947.<sup>127</sup>

In its desire to save precious dollars and to end food rationing it is easy to see how such a project appealed to

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<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Butler, op.cit., p.131.

<sup>127</sup> Havinden and Meredith, op.cit., pp.276-8.

the British government. The project was operated by the Overseas Food Corporation which was responsible to the Ministry of Food and not the Colonial Office. There was disquiet at lower levels in the Colonial Office over the details of the plan, but the plan received support from the top by those who chose to see it less as an answer to Britain's food situation and more as a means of modernising African agriculture. Sir Sydney Caine admired this 'new approach' to the problem of low African agricultural productivity by the use of massive mechanisation. Andrew Cohen thought it was 'the most important single act of government ever undertaken in British tropical Africa'.<sup>128</sup>

The initial presentation of the project was, however unfortunate, particularly when the Colonial Office was trying to project the value of 'partnership' to the colonies. The tabloid press, much to the chagrin of the Colonial Office's Information Department who had taken no steps to put the right spin on the announcement of the ODC or the OFC and greeted the news with 'Africa as the larder of Britain' and 'End to food rationing' confirming 'the widely held belief that Britain was an arch-exploiter of her colonial peoples'.<sup>129</sup>

Other commentators did welcome the project as a force for progress. The Economist heralded it as 'the sort of economic planning which is needed to change the face of the colonial empire'.<sup>130</sup> Elspeth Huxley waxed lyrical on the prospects of East African Groundnuts to an audience of the Royal Empire Society:

A spirit of hope and confidence, remarkable in this day and age, seems to be in the air. Like another Sleeping Beauty, Tanganyika is stirring, after years of torpidity, at the kiss of Prince Strachey [John Strachey, the Minister of Food], and blood transfusions from the British Treasury are bringing

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<sup>128</sup> Ronald Hyam (ed.), The Labour Government and the End of Empire, 1945-1951: Part I High Policy and Administration (London, ), p.xlvi.

<sup>129</sup> Blackburne, op.cit., p.92.

<sup>130</sup> The Economist, 1 March 1947 quoted in Low and Smith (eds) History of East Africa (Oxford, 1976), p.11



the roses to her anaemic cheeks.<sup>131</sup>

In the Christmas Day broadcast on the BBC in 1947 the mutual benefits of the scheme for the British and Africans were highlighted. The groundnuts project was described as offering 'solid ground for hope, hundreds of miles of jungle cleared by science and the bulldozer with a real promise of a better life for African and European'.<sup>132</sup>

The results of the project did not live up to the expectations of those who thought food rationing would be over or those who thought modern farming had come to Africa. Until March 1948 the project was run by the UAC for the Ministry of Food when it was turned over to the OFC. The progress at the first sight chosen, Kongwa was held back by a variety of factors. The machinery was poor, tractors were second hand and ex-military. There were delays in moving equipment. When at last equipment arrived, it broke down but there were no repair shops in Kongwa. As a result by the end of 1947 only 7,500 acres out of the projected 150,000 were ready to be planted. 3,400 acres of this figure had been grassland which had not even required clearing in the first place. The harvest was made difficult because the ground was baked by the sun. The yield was less than half the estimate of the Ministry of Food (355 lbs instead of 750 lbs per acre).<sup>133</sup>

In early 1948 Alan Wood an Australian journalist became the head of the Information Division of the OFC. Wood witnessed the continued failures of the project while the Ministers of Food glossed over the problems in any public pronouncements.<sup>134</sup> The year 1948 saw the OFC proposals for a new ten year plan for the cultivation of 2,355,000 acres in which sunflowers would be substituted

<sup>131</sup> Elspeth Huxley, 'Some Impressions of East Africa to-Day', United Empire, 28:5, September-October 1947.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, Imperialism and Popular Culture, p.183.

<sup>133</sup> Havinden and Meredith, op.cit., p.279.

<sup>134</sup> For his personal view of the groundnuts project c.f. his account in Alan Wood, The Groundnuts Affair (London, 1950).

for groundnuts at a cost of 67 million pounds. The Treasury refused to finance this change because the OFC had an expenditure limit of 50 million pounds. As result of bad rainfall when Kongwa's 25,000 acres of groundnuts and 20, 000 acres of sunflowers were harvested in early 1949 the yield was down to 144 lbs an acre.<sup>135</sup>

In 1951 the Treasury wrote off the debt and the project was transferred to the Colonial Office when it became an experimental agricultural scheme. It lost the taxpayer 36 million pounds and had been of no benefit to the British consumer, to the dollar saving Treasury or the Africans of Tanganyika.

Alan Wood felt he could not go on in defending the project and had resigned in September 1949. He understood there was nothing 'more natural than to try to postpone the day of reckoning, always hoping that something better would happen'. But in the final analysis he felt that

the case for public enterprises became untenable if, when things went wrong, the public were not immediately given the full facts, and those responsible removed.<sup>136</sup>

Colonial affairs were being covered by the media but not necessarily for the 'right' reasons or in the way the Colonial Office would have liked. By 1948 therefore the Colonial Office Information Department could claim that colonial affairs had a 'wider coverage in the Press than the affairs of any other Government Department other than the Ministry of Food'. However it also felt that the 'partnership' for progress story had not had a great impact on the British public.<sup>137</sup>

In 1948 the COI conducted a Social Survey into the extent of public interest in and knowledge of the British colonies. The Colonial Office did not regard the results

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<sup>135</sup> Havinden and Meredith, op.cit., p.279.

<sup>136</sup> Wood, op.cit., p.114.

<sup>137</sup> PRO, CO875/42/7, memorandum by Blackburne on the work and policy of the Information Department, 16 October 1948.



as very encouraging.<sup>138</sup> In the survey 1921 adults over the age of sixteen were questioned. The following is a summary of the results:

What people know	% of persons
a. People who have heard of the recent scheme to grow ground nuts	67
b. That native peoples in the colonies have a lower standard of living than ourselves	67
c. That we are teaching native peoples to govern themselves	66
d. That ground nuts are used to make margarine or fats	63
e. That Colonial inhabitants are mostly coloured, not white	62
f. That Britain assists the Colonies financially	59
g. People who can name at least <u>one</u> colony	49
h. People who can name at least <u>one</u> food or raw material from the Colonies	37
i. That our Colonies do <u>not</u> pay taxes to support us	33
j. The difference between a Dominion and a Colony	25
k. How our Colonies help to earn dollars for us	21
l. That the new ground nut scheme is in East Africa	16

The Survey concluded that public opinion was 'inclined to be complacent about the work being done in the Colonies'. While 19% thought we 'tended to be selfish in the past', while 'the great majority of people believe we are doing a "better job now"'. It was judged that only 22% 'were rated by our interviewers as showing a high degree of interest in the topic of the survey'.<sup>139</sup> Press comments concentrated on response g. and that a number of respondents thought

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<sup>138</sup> Charles Jeffries remarked 'this is most interesting and disturbing', PRO, CO875/72/2, minute by Jeffries, 23 November 1948.

<sup>139</sup> PRO, CO875/72/2, Social Survey conducted between 17 May and 3 June 1948.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were colonies.<sup>140</sup> However, the Colonial Office response is far too pessimistic. By the evidence of responses to statements a. and d. it is clear that the groundnuts story had an impact and was recognised by the public. Similarly responses to statements b., c., e., f., and g. should not have been cause for despair in the Colonial Office as they are high percentages, all but the last over fifty which are excellent results.

However, what was supposed to have been the 'good' story of colonial development had been badly handled and had left the Colonial Office in an exposed position and open to criticism. As the case of East African Groundnuts showed there was an obvious gulf between the propaganda of 'partnership' and the reality of exploitation. As Blackburne noted:

When the establishment of the Colonial Development Corporation was announced in the House of Commons ... the Information Department did not even know that such a proposal was under consideration. No publicity had been planned and no precautions had been taken to ensure that the measure was not presented to the colonial peoples as yet another attempt at 'exploitation'. The result was that the United Kingdom Press got off on the wrong feet ... they were immediately followed by the colonial Press; and I cannot but feel that much of the fear of 'exploitation' in the Colonies today is due to the fact that adequate steps were not taken to present this far-reaching development in the right light.<sup>141</sup>

This lack of publicity sense about colonial development continued. Despite the arguments of the Information Department, the Colonial Development Corporation was adverse to publicity of any kind, preferring to wait for concrete results before publicity was given to their activities.<sup>142</sup>

In spite of the difference between rhetoric and

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<sup>140</sup> C.f. 'Lincs a Colony Shocks Quizzers', Daily Mail, 21 December 1948.

<sup>141</sup> PRO, CO875/42/7, memorandum by Blackburne on the work and policy of the Information Department, 16 October 1948.

<sup>142</sup> PRO, CO875/50/1, minute by Blackburne, 15 November 1948.



reality the Labour government remained committed to projecting an image of 'new' empire of partnership for progress until the end of its administration in 1951. James Griffiths, the successor to Creech Jones as Secretary of State for the Colonies, evoked the image of partnership in a speech he gave at the opening of the touring 'Partners in Progress' colonial exhibition in Newcastle in February 1951. He said:

In such times as these, we in the Commonwealth need more than ever before to be able to strengthen our association one with another; for none can doubt that a powerful and united Commonwealth can contribute, possibly more than anything else to world peace and to bringing of all races together in an effective partnership.<sup>143</sup>

With hindsight the writing was already on the wall in 1948. The riots in the Gold Coast in reaction to the economic situation in West Africa and its impact on the political development of the whole of Africa, it was clear that the transfer of power in Africa would come sooner rather than later. Nor would the transfer of power necessarily be achieved in accordance with the desired objectives of the British government. For some this was apparent at the time. Propaganda promoting the benefits of 'partnership' could not keep calls for self-government at bay. In 1948 Kenneth Blackburne observed pessimistically the prospects for a continued British-colonial partnership in the form of self-government for the colonies within the Commonwealth were bleak:

The British Government have the task of maintaining a lasting association between Britain and the Colonies - a task which must be successfully achieved if the Commonwealth is to survive. Although the declared policy of the British Government is to promote self-government within the British Commonwealth, it will in fact be impossible to prevent a Colony from leaving the Commonwealth when it reaches the stage of self-government. We must therefore make the colonial peoples want to remain within the Commonwealth; and we must do our best to see that each Colony on attaining self-government follows the lead of Ceylon, and not

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<sup>143</sup> PRO, CO875/55/8, text of Griffiths' speech in Newcastle, 3 February 1951.

Burma.<sup>144</sup>

As Britain's power in the world diminished it would be increasingly difficult to convince the colonial peoples that it was to their advantage to remain in 'partnership' with Britain even within the Commonwealth:

This is a difficult task today. In past years it was clear to the colonial peoples that it was in their interests to remain closely associated with Britain. We had economic and military power which was clear for all to see. But now the colonial people can see for themselves only too plainly that Britain has to look to the United States for economic aid, and that paltry countries in South America can twist our tails with impunity. In the face of this it is difficult to argue that Britain is still a leading power in the world and that the Colonies derive great economic and strategic advantages from association with us. Although we in Britain have not lost faith in ourselves, no amount of propaganda at the present time will convince the leaders of opinion in the Colonies that other countries have not become more powerful than ourselves. And no propaganda will convince the colonial peoples that their economic and strategic interests lie wholly in continued association with Britain.

Can we then convince the Colonies that association with Britain is in their interests because we are good administrators or because we can give them skilled assistance? It is doubtful. Those Colonies where nationalism is becoming a powerful force - Colonies where our efforts to foster closer association are most important - are only too ready to say (even though they may not believe it) that they can take over from British administrators. In the face of ardent nationalism the old (and true) belief that British administration is the fairest in the world cannot be used as an argument to convince the colonial peoples of the value of the British connection. And who can say that we provide better qualified technicians than would be available if the Colonies were free to recruit from any country in the world?<sup>145</sup>

In the absence the positive material benefits of continued association, argued Blackburne, 'it would seem necessary for us to pay attention to other more intangible factors which have hitherto helped to maintain the unity of the Commonwealth - the ties of tradition and friendship'.

The links of tradition which bind the Colonies to Britain are most clearly shown in the loyalty and

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<sup>144</sup> PRO, CO875/50/3, note by Blackburne, 'the Royal Family and the Colonies', June 1948.

<sup>145</sup> ibid.



respect of all colonial peoples for the Royal family. This devotion to the Royal Family is shown by the requests which are continually reaching the Colonial Office from virtually every colonial territory for more photographs of the King and Queen, and for more information about every Royal occasion. Even those who decry British imperialism and demand immediate self-government have respect and even loyalty to the Royal Family.<sup>146</sup>

The gap between rhetoric and reality was already apparent in 1948. But the 'partnership' theme continued to be central to British colonial policy and propaganda right up to Winds of Change in 1960 and the eventual failure of the great experiment in 'multi-racial partnership' of the Central African Federation.

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<sup>146</sup> ibid.

## CONCLUSION

Interest in the study of Britain's imperial period has considerably revived since the generations of Max Beloff - who argued that the British have never really been an imperially minded people and have neither possessed a theory of empire nor a will to carry it into to practice - and of A.J.P. Taylor who regarded the imperial dimension as a mere irrelevance to the understanding of the history of Britain in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> During the last decade a substantial, and still growing, body of research has been published, covering various aspects of British imperial history both during the pre-1939 and the post-1945 period. One aspect of imperial history has not yet been explored however: the development and use of propaganda as a new method of control and instrument of policy for the government of the colonies.

The history of the development of propaganda agencies and the use of modern public relations techniques as an increasingly integral part of the working of the twentieth century state, in peace and in war, has also been a major subject of research and publication in the last two decades. Major published studies have covered the history of British government agencies and organisations for information, publicity and propaganda for domestic political and for diplomatic purposes in the inter-war period; for these purposes as well as for maintaining morale and for waging psychological warfare during the Second World War, and doctoral dissertations and some publications have also explored this aspect of the history of Britain during the post war decade. One part of that subject too has not yet been covered however: the development of official propaganda organisation for conducting propaganda in the colonies.

This thesis therefore sought to fill a gap in both subject areas: the propaganda dimension in the history of the British empire and the colonial dimension in the

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<sup>1</sup> C.f. MacKenzie, Imperialism and Popular Culture, pp.1-2.



history of British propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

There is another area where the findings of this thesis may also be said to fill a gap. Most of the studies of the history of the British empire in the twentieth century either end in 1939 or begin in 1945. This was based on, and perpetuates the broad assumption that the period from the end of the First World War to the outbreak of the Second was a period of slow decline with the faith in the drive of empire having ebbed away - and that the period from 1945 onwards was a period of 'decolonisation', the final dissolution of the old empire, initiated by Labour coming into power.

For the Eastern empire - India, Burma, Ceylon - and also for the Middle Eastern empire - Palestine and other possessions in and around the Arabian peninsula - this perspective has much to be said for it. But by missing out the war-time period not only is there a gap chronologically but also a very important gap in terms of that invigoration which the war had brought to many parts of British government, society and culture. In the case of the imperial part, the Colonial Office, this manifested itself in a re-examination and re-formulation of the imperial ideal and a burst of new policies, and indeed led to a revival of the will to empire itself. The idea of Britain's 'new' empire in Africa emerged and with it the concept of a multi-racial partnership under British auspices as the legitimisation, indeed mission, of Britain as an imperial power. Noting these phrases, historians who have started from 1945 ascribed these changes in the perception and purposes of empire mistakenly to Labour coming to power, whereas in fact these were the work of a

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<sup>2</sup> The third related area, of course, is the projection of the imperial idea in general and of colonial policies from time to time to the British public at home. This was largely done by semi-official or altogether private organisations or individuals - as indeed was the projection of anti-imperialist views - as part of the domestic free-market of ideas and democratic politics. The activities of these pro-empire propagandists and their impact on the popular mind have been the subject of two major studies in the past decade: Propaganda and Empire and Imperialism and Popular Culture both by Professor John MacKenzie.

younger generation of Colonial Office officials during the war as well as of the wartime ministers for the colonies. In no sense was this change and renewal the result of Labour coming to power.

The thesis therefore fills the chronological hiatus of the 1939-1948 period; offers a corrective to the perspective of linear decline of the British empire in the twentieth century, and it is hoped, helps to explain the centrality of Africa to post-war British thinking and actions in respect of colonialism as well as decolonisation. At least it can be said that there was between 1943 and 1948 a short period when there was both a theory of empire and a will to implement it. Without understanding that between the slow ossification of the old idea of empire, and the final failure and dissolution of the new empire there was such a period of revival of idealism and optimism, neither the language of political discourse nor at least some of the actions of the government during the post-1948 period of decolonisation can make full sense.

It would be tempting to regard the war years and the immediate post-war period as a short prequel to the main event: the disintegration of the British colonial empire in Africa. With hindsight it can be argued that the warning bells were clear and were loudly rung during the Second World War. However as we have seen there is a great difference between being conscious of the potential dangers faced by the empire, and not seeking to do something about them. What emerges is a picture of a Colonial Office and a Colonial Service conscious of the dangers and their unwillingness to be defeated by them. On the contrary, particularly after 1943 we have seen a new confidence and a new mission and the beginnings of the second colonial development of Africa. Instead of pessimism about the future of the empire in Africa we have seen an attempt to seize the initiative and create a stable framework for the guidance of the colonial partners along the road to self-government within a permanent relationship to Britain and with the benefits of membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations. This is not a story of an organisation



employing public relations palliatives to ease the management of decline, but an organisation attempting to meet problems head on before the initiative had slipped from British hands. That the period animated by a policy of colonial reform and renewal had come to be replaced in 1948 by the beginnings of political decolonisation makes it a unique period of imperial history.

During the period covered by this thesis a brief revolution took place in the aims and conduct of Britain's colonial policy. Between 1939 and 1948 the whole rationale and purpose of the empire changed and for the first time public relations became a central method of British colonial policy. In the late 1930s with the emergence of the colonial question in international diplomacy and the unrest in the British colonial empire resulting from economic problems, the colonial empire had ceased to be a source of British prestige. Critics of Britain's colonial policy at home and abroad needed to be answered. The Colonial Office and Colonial Service was forced to emerge from their complacency of previous eras and could no longer enjoy the luxury of allowing 'good' administration to speak for itself. The laissez-faire approach to empire and the idea of colonial self-sufficiency were abandoned and replaced with a new drive to develop the British empire. The new policy of colonial development and welfare implied government intervention in the colonial empire on an unprecedented level. As in Britain, the state became the chief agency for public welfare and economic development which would create viable colonial states. This new version of the imperial relationship and the success of the development schemes depended on the active participation and cooperation of all those involved, of the colonial and British publics. The time had passed when the British were powerful enough to govern by the bayonet. Coercion gave way to persuasion; the British would rule the empire by consent.

By 1943 a new definition of this new colonial mission was found and publicised which reflected the change in theory and practice. A defensive and static conception of the 'old' empire based on the principle of benevolent

trusteeship was replaced by the dynamic and positive conception of the 'new' empire based on the principle of 'partnership'. The British would cooperate with their junior partners in the colonies along the road to self-government. 'Partnership' then represented a fundamental shift in British attitudes towards the empire. Unlike the paternalism inherent in the concept of trusteeship, 'partnership' implied working with and not for the colonial peoples. During this long-term effort the British would educate the colonial peoples in the tasks of creating viable states and provide the means by which this could be achieved through the granting of colonial development and welfare funds. The colonial empire would again be a source of British prestige as Britain regained her reputation as a colonial power. The manufacture of consent would be the means of realising the new empire. Accordingly, 'partnership' was projected both as the means and the end of the 'new' empire; even after the achievement of self-government in the colonies, 'partnership' would continue through the Commonwealth relationship. Public relations would increase public knowledge about the British colonial policy and its objectives. At home, public relations would help the British public understand their responsibilities towards the colonial empire. In the colonies, public relations would mould the way in which future developments would be perceived and optimally would help to bridge the awkward gap between the rise of political consciousness and the time when political aspirations could be satisfied. Public relations also served another purpose in the colonies. It was a two-way process whereby the government explained their policies but was to be important in gauging public opinion in the colonies so that colonial peoples could feel that their views were being taken into account.

The colonial propaganda effort can be assessed on several levels and against different criteria. What has been done, on what scale, with what consistency of purpose? What degree of flexibility was shown in the choice of techniques, and what degree of willingness was there to learn from experience? How appropriate were the themes and the techniques for the intended result and how suitable for



the particular audiences? The evidence does not allow each of these criteria to be applied to every case but overall reasonably firm conclusions can be drawn. In the first place it is important to note that propaganda organisations were established for the first time both in London and in the territories of East and Central Africa. This necessarily proved to be a learning process, but the Colonial Office and the colonial governments were prepared to learn on the job and to improvise in areas of activity in which they had little and in many cases no prior experience. The wide range of means eventually employed, and the change from simple propaganda to broader based public relations was a result of the Colonial Office and Colonial Service willingness to learn and to be flexible. The propaganda effort was continually assessed and there were modifications in the vehicles of propaganda and the themes employed. There was a great change in both how and what was projected in the 1939-1948 period. Colonial propaganda changed from supporting the overall war effort to the projection of Colonial Office ambitions for the long-term future of the empire in which public relations was to be a permanent feature as a means of projecting the 'new' empire.

In the beginning the colonial propaganda effort concentrated on war propaganda in the colonial empire itself. The encouragement for the establishment of propaganda organisations in the colonies came from London and the initial propaganda plans were also drawn up in London. It is also important to note that this planning was undertaken by the Empire Division of the MOI as part of its overall responsibility for British propaganda in general. Unlike the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office did not have any formal propaganda apparatus and its initial role was therefore to oversee the preparations made by another Department. We have seen how the Colonial Office slowly developed its own publicity sense and how this inevitably brought it into conflict with the MOI over questions of responsibility. While it is possible to sympathise with some of the Colonial Office criticisms about the amateurism and academic approach of the Colonial

Section of the MOI's Empire Division, this attitude did little to promote effective cooperation. The inter-departmental squabbles persisted until the calmer times following Gervas Huxley's appointment in April 1943 and had a detrimental affect on the production of colonial propaganda resulting inefficiency, delays, abandoned projects and a general waste of energy and time.

Many of the assumptions about the methods of projection which formed part of the initial planning for this new activity had to be altered. Initially the plans for propaganda in the territories of East and Central Africa were drawn up on a regional basis. This was soon altered to reflect the difference between the territories within the regions and also because of the fears of dominance of Nairobi in East Africa and Salisbury in Central Africa. Instead the territories were to have their own Information Offices and were encouraged to cooperate with each other in exchange of information and materials, with some coordination of activities later on in the war through the MOI's officer the PIO in Kenya. The projection of the war was a news based effort explaining the nature of the war and encouraging a feeling of the unity of the empire in a common struggle against Nazism. Initially great emphasis was laid on the press and the written word and the colonies were provided with a steady diet of general MOI propaganda articles, pamphlets and posters which were not designed for the territories in Africa and much to the chagrin of the Colonial Office contained cliches about Anglo-Saxon democracy. But general propaganda was of course cheaper to produce. The Empire Service of the BBC was seen as a means of providing immediate news and a daily connection between the territories and the Britain. The audiences for this kind of propaganda were therefore limited to the European settlers and educated Africans and not a mass African audience. Gradually however propaganda appropriate for the mass African audience was evolved and the potentials of using film and the radio was gradually recognised. It was also clear that the colonies did not possess the facilities to make films or broadcast themselves as these had been



seen as luxury activities in the pre-war period. This gap was remedied by the establishment of the Colonial Film Unit and by the encouragement of local broadcasting in the colonies.

As the war progressed a gradual improvement took place in the range and quality of the propaganda about the empire for audiences in the colonies. As the local Information Offices were developed the general material produced by the MOI in London was increasingly adapted to meet the specific needs of the territories and vernacular translations of MOI material was produced by the territorial IOs. However while the methods of projection had slowly improved the simplistic morale boosting theme of imperial unity and cooperative war effort largely remained. Coupled with the absence of clear war aims about the empire it can be argued that these kind of appeals had little to offer in the long-run. African audiences could be pardoned for failing to see the relevance of the war to their own lives, for example when the Colonial Film Unit produced films explicitly for Africans with titles like This is a Searchlight. As far as the European audiences were concerned the appeals to kith and kin to maximise their war effort may have reflected London's desire to avoid political controversies during the war, such as the demands for amalgamation in Central Africa and closer union in East Africa, but it is difficult to see how long Britain could hope to play the loyalty card when the position of the settler communities had grown in importance as a direct result of their valuable war contributions.

At home the Colonial Office developed its own publicity sense and altered its relationship with the MOI from being reactive to being pro-active and also making suggestions of its own. The appointment of Noel Sabine as the Public Relations Officer in July 1940 ensured that the Colonial Office was better equipped than it had been hitherto to take the initiative. The passive pre-war practice of issuing information on demand was altered and the evidence shows the beginnings of Colonial Office cooperation with journalists, publishing houses, the FCB and other government departments. The passing of the

Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940 was also important in the development of public relations in the Colonial Office. It offered a way to focus attention on the positive contribution of Britain to its empire. In the absence of specific war aims about the empire it could be projected to the colonial empire as a 'carrot'. It could help answer critics of British colonial policy. It made the projection of the British empire and the empire's contributions to the war effort to the British public not only desirable but a necessity in order to explain the mutually beneficial relationship it had outlined. The Colonial Office therefore became more sensitive to these needs itself and urged the MOI to make the projection of the British empire at home a greater priority.

The Colonial Office became increasingly concerned about the short-term nature of the MOI's 'win the war' propaganda. The argument was made, and eventually accepted, that efforts should be made whilst the war was being fought to 'win the peace' too. Regardless of the war, audiences both at home and in the colonies should be prepared for the tasks of post-war reconstruction through a long-term campaign of education in responsibilities to create mutual understanding. Propaganda therefore would be related more to the life of the peoples of the empire as well as to the necessity of winning the war. But this new propaganda policy was not implemented immediately.

The shattering experience of the collapse of British power in South-East Asia and the entrance of the United States into the war resulted in a period of introspection about colonial policy and its projection, and led to calls for a new articulation of British colonial policy and suggestions about a Charter for the Colonies similar to the Atlantic Charter. The Colonial Office was subjected to American pressures to join with them and issue a statement which would promise timetables for the granting of independence to British colonial territories. Refusing to succumb under the weight of international diplomatic pressure, the Colonial Office managed to mount a defence of its position. It also found a way of evolving a policy statement which would re-articulate Britain's colonial



mission without compromising the policy of developing colonial empire so as to create viable states which would indeed be eventually capable of governing themselves, but would remain within the spirit of 'partnership'. The Colonial Office emerged re-fortified in itself and armed with a statement and vision for the future of the empire which could be justified in front of world opinion. It represented a change in British colonial policy by embodying the development philosophy and provided a theme for long-term public relations work about the empire.

Long-term propaganda for the new empire of 'partnership' became the theme of all propaganda about the empire at home, in the colonies and abroad. It reflected the confidence of the Colonial Office and the enthusiasm for the tasks of reconstruction. The Colonial Office had found the theme and were then to reap the benefits of a new head of the Empire Division at the MOI, Gervas Huxley. Under the leadership of Huxley the colonial propaganda effort of the MOI moved up a gear and exploited every opportunity to tell the story of the colonial empire. The range and volume of propaganda increased. At home there was the happy coincidence of two Huxleys leading the campaign to educate the British public, Gervas at the MOI and his wife Elspeth as the Colonial Adviser to the BBC. Not only did relations between the MOI and the Colonial Office improve, the empire content of BBC programme output reached its highest levels during the war. Huxley ensured that the 'partnership' story was told through a variety of media. New pamphlet series were introduced, a touring exhibition which attracted enormous crowds was mounted, cooperation with publishing houses was intensified and the colonial empire featured to a greater extent as the subject of talks given by MOI speakers. British youth was targeted both directly through regional conferences and scout and guide organisations and also through educating the educators by targeting school teachers. Women were also specifically targeted with specialist material. The Armed Forces were targeted through material produced for ABCA.

The propaganda produced for African audiences and produced in the colonies themselves also developed into

long-term public relations work around the theme of 'partnership'. In London the film output of the CFU increased and began to reflect development and welfare subjects. Local film production was begun in Africa and regional broadcasting systems were explored. The British Council whose empire activities had been limited to the Near East and the production of the newsreel British News made plans for a post-war expansion in East and Central Africa. As with the activities of the Mobile Propaganda Unit, the propaganda produced under the auspices of the PIO tended to retain a military flavour mainly because the East Africa Command often provided the resources and manpower. However progress was made in other public relations areas too. Harry Franklin's outfit in Northern Rhodesia, in particular had succeeded in breaking out from the limits of purely war propaganda.

In addition to audiences in Britain and in the colonies, American opinion received special attention. We have seen the potential for American interference in what was considered the internal affairs of the British empire with American calls for a joint Anglo-American declaration on the colonies. To counter and pre-empt such interference in the future it was however mistakenly assumed that American anti-imperialism was based on ignorance. British publicity efforts in the United States were thus designed to make a rational appeal to modify what in fact was an emotional response. It was an approach which was unlikely to get very far either before Pearl Harbour or after. While American interference combined with the impact of the collapse of British power in the Far East resulted in the re-articulation of the British colonial vision in the statement by Stanley in July 1943 and which produced the theme for colonial propaganda thereafter, sensitivity to other American prejudices undermined Colonial Office attempts to be radical in its own attitudes to race questions.

The war-time period therefore is integral to the story of the projection of the 'new' empire and affected colonial propaganda both in positive and negative ways. The projection of the British empire was part of the general



British propaganda effort aimed at winning the war and brought greater resources and higher skills into play. On the other hand, propaganda about the colonial empire became caught up in the interests of other departments whose priorities were different to those of the Colonial Office. Until 1943 the Colonial Office was engaged in a struggle with the MOI over control and direction of propaganda about the colonial empire. During the 1942-3 period the Colonial Office also fought off Foreign Office and American government attempts to articulate British colonial policy in accordance with American wishes. Eventually the Colonial Office was able to take the initiative and find its own lines of development. While the MOI's short-term 'win the war' propaganda continued, the projection of the colonial empire incorporated long-term educative propaganda.

The war acted as a constraint in a number of ways. On a large scale colonial propaganda had to compete for resources with other propaganda stories. Colonial stories also had to compete with more exciting war news. Personnel problems were particularly acute. With many Colonial Service officers joining up there were shortages which led to combining the role of the education officer with the Information Officer. War propaganda was dependent on the ebb and flow on the battle field and the immediacy and relevance of some of the propaganda material became outdated very quickly because of the time it took for material to reach the colonies.

The war also had an important impact on the relationship between the centre and the colonies. Policy and propaganda initiatives came substantially from London and wartime conditions help to explain in part why there was metropolitan dominance. In a general sense the coordination and management of the war effort and the mobilisation of the resources of the colonial empire was an imperialistic activity necessarily directed from the centre in London. The experience of central war planning combined with the new attitude to Britain's development responsibilities in the colonies created new habits of central intervention and which were not relinquished once

peace returned. The Colonial Office machinery in London also expanded and altered to reflect these new tasks with the growth of subject departments, of which the creation of the Public Relations Department itself forms a part. The centre-periphery relationship reflected the centre's confidence in its ability to act as a guide to what was happening in the colonies. As a result of practical considerations at the time London was also at the centre of the story of the development of propaganda in the colonial empire. Under urgent wartime conditions and in the absence of information organisations in the territories, the Colonial Office acted as both the procreator, midwife and guardian of this new activity. Starting from scratch, the colonies were galvanised into action, in an area of activity which had been considered a luxury in the pre-war period and had never been a high priority in colonial government expenditure. It was London which provided the funds to build up information organisations, supplied equipment and also the propaganda material. It was cheaper to supply the colonies with basic materials which were produced in bulk in London. Centralisation of control over propaganda also ensured that a necessary condition of any propaganda campaign was met, all the more important in wartime when British colonial policy was being misrepresented by others: that of speaking with the same voice.

The concept of 'new' empire itself based on the principle of 'partnership' also gave a strong role for the centre. London would no longer neglect the empire and leave it to the men on the spot to oversee the administration but would act as the enabler for the development of the colonial territories to the point where London would accede self-government. As we have seen it was in these years, and after 1943 in particular, that Colonial Office optimism was most evident. The centre saw itself both willing and able to take and hold the initiative over future developments in the colonies. As far as the particular political circumstances pertaining in the British East and Central Africa it was only by the Colonial Office being pro-active that the delicate



partnership between the races and thus African interests could be protected against domination by white settler interests, thus maintaining a balance with the advances made by the settlers in the course of the war in the government of these territories.

The location of power was therefore at the centre in London. During the war the Colonial Office cooperated with the MOI and the MOI was the fundholder of Britain's propaganda effort. At the periphery the colonial governments implemented propaganda plans devised in London and propaganda activities were overseen by the MOI's representative on the spot, the PIO located in Nairobi. This is not to suggest that the periphery was powerless or that it blindly followed diktats emanating from London. Indeed the principle of devolution was accepted during the war and it was always recognised that the activities at the centre would eventually diminish as local information organisations developed. The colonial governments were encouraged to adapt basic material produced in London to suit local requirements and any suggestions which they made which helped London to get the type of propaganda right was similarly welcomed. The feedback from the territorial Information Officers, for example, was invaluable to the BBC Empire Service and helped to adjust the emphasis of propaganda away from the early propaganda staples of posters and pamphlets and the written word to more accessible and universal media of sound and vision. The negative reaction against the MOI's diet of win the war propaganda fortified the arguments of the propaganda specialists in the Colonial Office that colonial propaganda should also be concerned with long-term public relations. The initiatives from London could only achieve so much and it was up to the individual colonies to do the rest.

London then has featured heavily in the story of the projection of the 'new' empire. The rapid turnover of Secretaries of State for the Colonies<sup>3</sup>, with seven in the period 1939-48 undoubtedly affected the continuity at the top in London and as has been argued elsewhere meant that

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2.

Secretaries of State for the Colonies tended to be 'caretakers' rather than 'builders'.<sup>4</sup> This rapid turnover of office holders did not inspire confidence. The Colonial Office was seen as a Cinderella department, a stepping stone to higher office.<sup>5</sup> However the role of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was often decisive in the development of the 'new' empire. A crucial role was played by Malcolm MacDonald, for it was he who had the political will to carry through the new colonial development and welfare policies and it was he who first proposed the establishment of a Public Relations Department in the Colonial Office, but once departed, without his drive the suggestion was put on hold for nearly three years. Following the collapse of British colonial power in South-East Asia Lord Cranborne provided the necessary leadership at the moment when the colonial empire faced its severest challenge. Oliver Stanley gave voice to the new found confidence in the Colonial Office and made the path-breaking speech in July 1943 which gave the go-ahead to the 'partnership' propaganda initiatives. Creech Jones proved himself to be enthusiastic for the continuation of the Colonial Office role in explaining British colonial policy as a means of implementing colonial policy at a time when the public relations activities of the department were under threat from post-war retrenchment. But due to the Colonial Office's relatively weak position within Whitehall's hierarchy and Creech Jones' own lack of power within Cabinet he failed in to bring realism to bear in the debate of 1947-8 over seeing Africa as a panacea for British economic ills.

It is also clear that the role of the officials is crucial to this story. It was the permanent officials who supplied the continuity within colonial policy-making and its implementation. When we talk about the importance of

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<sup>4</sup> Cyril Ehrlich 'Building and Caretaking: economic policy in British Tropical Africa, 1890-1960', Economic History Review, 26 (1973).

<sup>5</sup> Ralph Furse, Aucuparius: Recollections of a Recruiting Officer (London, 1962), p.13.



'the official mind' it is necessary to remember that there were official minds. The period of change in colonial policy and method coincided with the emergence of a new 'development' generation among the higher ranking civil servants in the Colonial Office. A clear generation gap is apparent between the older and more conservative senior officials like Sir Cosmo Parkinson and Sir John Shukburgh. The 'last Victorians' were out of step with the adoption both of a more pro-active role by the Colonial Office in the development of British colonies and the need to publicise colonial policy as part of this new role. The 'development generation' of senior civil servants like Sir Charles Jeffries, Sir Thomas Lloyd, Sir Sydney Caine and Sir Andrew Cohen were modernisers and embraced the new development philosophy and the changes it had on the relationship between the governing and the governed. It was these men who learnt to change their administrative habits and embraced the modern age by facing up to the developments in communication and the opportunities which this offered. They realised that the time had passed when the work of the Colonial Office was done behind closed doors out of the spotlight of public scrutiny. Though Caine argued against a permanent role for public relations in the activities of the Colonial Office, by the end of the war he was in the minority. The consensus which had been formed about the role of public relations was also important in providing continuity for the change from war to peace and the change from the Coalition to Labour government.

Officials at a lower level were also crucial to the story of the projection of the 'new' empire of 'partnership'. Noel Sabine the first Public Relations Officer in the Colonial Office continually drew the MOI's and the Colonial Office's attention to the opportunity of using propaganda for constructive purposes in addition to war propaganda which would help the tasks of reconstruction once peace returned. Lord Hailey was the inspiration in the wake of the South-East Asian disasters in translating how the new development and welfare legislation would affect the colonial empire and discovering the theme for

all subsequent colonial propaganda: 'partnership'. Gervas Huxley then brought his expertise and enthusiasm to the task of projecting the new theme and also managed to improve the Empire Division of the MOI's relationship with the Colonial Office. In the colonies the achievements of the Northern Rhodesian Information Office under Harry Franklin stand out as being the model for future developments and also how an amateur with flair for public relations could try and live the partnership ideal as well as publicise it.

In the post-war period the themes and media employed continued along the lines established during the war. The task of state building by creating viable units became the practical manifestations of 'partnership'. 'Development fever', was the result of the implementation of the plans produced under the aegis of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945. On the political level the new Labour government sought to put meat on the bones of political partnership by educating Africans into a state of responsibility through the route of local government. The calamitous position of the British economy in 1947-8 however meant Britain was hardly in a position to honour her colonial commitments. As the priority became economic recovery at home, Britain's empire in Africa was looked to to provide a way out of Britain's economic ills. The failure of the East African Groundnuts Scheme publicly exposed the fallacies on which British policy and propaganda were based. By 1948 the 'super-exploitation' experienced by the colonies sat uneasily with the professed aims of 'partnership': social and economic development and progress towards self-government. The propagandists were conscious of these contradictions and ceased to have faith in their product.

As we have seen from 1943 there was a dogged adherence to the concept of 'partnership' as both the guiding principle of the British empire and the theme of propaganda about the colonial empire. 'Partnership' was both a blessing and a burden. It was progressive enough to mark a break with the connotations of a top-downward relationship and would encourage everyone to believe the mutual benefit



of play in the progress of the empire. 'Partnership' was a very vague concept: in its ambiguity lay its acceptability. It could mean all things to all people and had the advantage of avoiding making the political choices which the British government feared would undermine their controlling position forever.

'Partnership' did however imply a change in political relationships and the modernisation of the political relationship between the British and the local leadership in the colonies. The active collaboration of local leaders and the mass of the African populations was necessary to make the new development policies work. It also meant that the days of Indirect Rule were numbered. The acceptance that the colonial peoples would no longer be administered into a state of responsibility but educated into it meant that political institutions would need to be reformed to meet the new challenges of building viable states. The Native Authorities which had developed according to the principles of Indirect Rule was the way in which the British used traditional local authorities as agents of local rule. But it was recognised that these institutions were essentially vehicles for reaction and not progress; they were not equipped to perform the tasks of modern local government and did not represent the people as the authority of traditional rulers, chieftains and Emirs was left intact. The impact of the war on African administration was assessed as part of the Colonial Office exercise which produced the Local Government Despatch of February 1947. It found that new conditions applied in Africa, among them the growing political consciousness of the 'middle classes' and growing demands for improved social services which would have to be met by improvements in local administration. A way would have to be found to increase the power of the emerging intelligentsia who had no role in the administration of their territories and it was not felt that the traditional Native Authorities would

spontaneously evolve into efficient democratic government.<sup>6</sup> But even by the abandonment of Indirect Rule and the recognition of the need to harness the support of the educated elites for constructive purposes did not necessarily mean that the tribal chiefs had to be abandoned. Cooperation between tribal and educated elites would be encouraged in the development of local government and therefore the British would be in position where they would be able to avoid making an irrevocable choice between them.

With hindsight it appears to be audacious indeed for the British government to hope that they could contain political aspirations. Their hopes of unleashing black nationalism for controlled and constructive purposes were utterly unrealistic. But at the time the British felt they had time on their side. Mass black nationalism had yet to become a feature of African life in East and Central Africa. The nationalism the British had to deal with was white settler nationalism. And through 'partnership' the British hoped not only to channel future African political developments for constructive purposes but also to channel settler energies too. But 'partnership' can be condemned as a retrograde step and a sell out to settler nationalism for it seemed to replace the principle of African paramountcy by suggesting that the white settlers had a permanent role to play in Africa. The doctrine of native paramountcy meant that the interests of the majority black African populations should not be subordinated to those of a minority belonging to another race. On the other hand, partnership meant that the interests of either community could not be subordinated to those of the other. The policy-makers had been conscious of the threat posed by the white settlers and hoped to head them off with the idea of 'partnership'. 'Partnership' was a way of buying time for progress to be made on African representation until they

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<sup>6</sup> PRO, C0847/38/3, Memorandum by Ronald Robinson, 'Some recent trends in native administration policy in the British African territories', undated 1947, quoted in Ronald Hyam (ed.) The Labour Government ... Part I, pp.153-57.



could take their place in the governance of their territories. If the Colonial Office can be condemned it can perhaps be for its naivety in hoping that the experience of partnership could be so successful that white settler nationalism could be tempered. So while partnership replaced trusteeship it also replaced native paramountcy.

In spite of the doubts expressed about the future of the empire and the ability of propaganda to hold the line when the realities of the 'partnership' came to be seen by 1948, 'partnership' continued to be the theme of government propaganda about the empire in Africa long after doubts in private were first expressed in 1948. Indeed some of the most flowery expressions of it in public came well after its failure was generally accepted within Whitehall and Westminster. Lord Salisbury's statement in parliament in 1952 was a particularly clear though not untypical example:

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are at one with their predecessors in regarding as the aim of their policy the advancement of all communities without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed. Progress must, in our view, be based on partnership between the races, not on domination by any. When, with our aid, each community has achieved a feeling of security in partnership, more rapid progress will be possible with our policy of helping the territory to attain self-government within the Commonwealth. It is not easy to achieve that security and partnership, nor can it be brought about solely by governmental action. It will take time, during which Her Majesty's Government must retain ultimate control.<sup>7</sup>

A draft prepared for a broadcast by Oliver Lyttleton in 1953 after partnership was consumed in the flames of the Mau Mau uprising in East Africa and Nkrumah's Convention People's Party was swept to victory in West Africa, sums up the unrealism and hollow rhetoric into which partnership had declined by the 1950s:

The future of Central Africa can only lie in partnership. The races of Central Africa are all

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<sup>7</sup> PRO, CO1027/7, extract from House of Lords Official Report given by Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 18 November 1952 sent to all African governments as publicity material, 13 December 1952.

essential to one another, none can do without the other. But partnership can only grow with prosperity. You cannot share poverty and uncertainty. A little boldness, a little confidence, and the thing is done. In a few years after Federation, many of those who have fears about it, may look in amazement, and ask themselves, 'What was there to be frightened about? How could we have got on without it?' But more likely they will be busy making federation work, building a happier and a more prosperous British Central Africa.<sup>8</sup>

In her Reith Lectures of 1961 Margery Perham attempted to make sense of what was by then the all too visible collapse of Britain's 'new' empire in Africa:

People of my generation were taught from their schooldays that our empire was a splendid achievement, conducted as much for the good of its many peoples as for our own, peoples who, indeed, now owe us the form of their existence as national states. The words 'trusteeship' and 'partnership' held serious meaning. To the generation before us the 'white man's burden' was not a rather bitter joke. Then how, we ask, has 'colonialism' suddenly, as it seems, become such a term of abuse? Have we been utterly blind? Was the idealism we so often professed merely a cloak in which we tried to hid our complete self-interest from the world, and indeed for ourselves. Has our rule really harmed these peoples, distorted or delayed their development?<sup>9</sup>

Commentators like Margery Perham who had spent her life devoted to Africa had been sincere in their devotion to principles like partnership. Perhaps the problem with the 'new' empire of 'partnership' was simply that in spite of good intentions and a dash of idealism the British government had hoped for the impossible that they would be able to persuade Africans, black as well as the white settlers, to progress along lines laid out by the British. The initiative passed from the hands of British attempts to control the progress of developments in the colonial empire and power was not transferred to the stable and viable states which the economic and social development policies and political partnership hoped to create.

It is impossible to provide concrete evidence which can show what difference propaganda, isolated from other

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<sup>8</sup> PRO, CO1027/36, draft broadcast by Oliver Lyttleton, February 1953.

<sup>9</sup> Margery Perham, The Colonial Reckoning (London, 1961), pp.14-5.



factors, made. We can establish what its themes and organisation were, its relationship to policy and quantify, at least, substantially, its output. We can qualitatively assess at least in technical terms that output in particular contexts and judge its appropriateness for the policies it was intended to serve. Some broad conclusions can also be drawn however. On a very basic level it can be noted that the growth in mass communications meant the Second World War presented a very different problem for imperial government than the First World War. Colonial audiences were vulnerable to enemy propaganda through the electronic media which could not be excluded physically and did not even require high levels of literacy. At the very least therefore the colonial propaganda effort was successful in ensuring that the British case did not fall by default. In the short-term context of the war it can be argued that the colonial propaganda effort contributed to winning the war. The Second World War came in fact to represent the high point in the history of imperial cooperation and unity, which need not have been the case. The contributions of Africans and European settlers in manpower, monetary gifts and resources were invaluable to the British war effort. Public discussions of the divisive issues involved political controversy over the future of Africa was contained in the colonies. At home the British public was encouraged to 'think empire' appreciate its contribution and understand their responsibilities to their colonial partners. The strength drawn from the empire became part of the mythology of England standing alone before Pearl Harbour and Barbarossa and confirmed notions of British 'otherness'. The potentially damaging divisions within Britain had been contained by a re-articulation of the British colonial mission and encapsulation of it in effective slogans and images so that until the mid-1950s it can be claimed that British colonial policy was genuinely bi-partisan. The potential disruptiveness of colonial rule in Anglo-American relations was also effectively handled by similar methods.

In the long-term a general assessment is more problematic. Notwithstanding the utility of the idea of

'partnership', and that the Colonial Office and the Colonial Service had ensured that they had begun to equip themselves organisationally to 'win the peace', these were missed opportunities as well as failures of government. Time was going to be an essential factor for the success of propaganda for the 'new' empire of 'partnership'. But the British never faced up to the fact of having an ever reducing time-scale in Africa. Propaganda never addressed an essential concern of any nationalist movement, be it a willing collaborator or uncooperative opponent: the question of when self-rule would be achieved. It also seems that the British policy-makers and propagandists had never faced up to the fact that nationalists would choose self-government over good government, that public opinion had a life of its own, what Philip Bell has called 'the autonomy of public opinion'.<sup>10</sup>

It is also clear however that enough were convinced of the continuation of 'partnership', albeit on their own terms to help the maintenance of that shadowy but nevertheless important post-imperialist link represented in the organisation of the Commonwealth, which Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi have chosen to remain.

In the final analysis the projection was initially successful and made a significant contribution to the survival of the British empire in Africa during the war and helped it to emerge from the war in a much better shape than without, on all the evidence, it would have been. What it did not achieve was to maintain it after the war. But then:

information services can not produce miracles ... they are only an instrument of policy: and that policy must be right and the facts favourable before they can produce results.<sup>11</sup>

After the war, colonial policy went increasingly wrong and

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<sup>10</sup> P.M.H. Bell, John Bull and the Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and the Soviet Union, 1941-1945 (London, 1990), p.23.

<sup>11</sup> PRO, CO1027/40, Evans to Carstairs, 11 September 1953.



increasingly failed to produce the facts, the investment and the control over the white settlers without which the propagandists were bound to fail, in the sense of the failure of the policy as a whole.

APPENDIX 1  
BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX<sup>1</sup>

AMERY, Leopold Stennett (1873-1955). Balliol College, Oxford. Private Secretary to Rt. Hon. L.H. Courtney M.P., 1896-7. Editorial staff, The Times, 1899-1909. Organised The Times war correspondence, South Africa, 1899-1900. Called to the Bar, Inner Temple, 1902. Contested Wolverhampton East as Unionist and Tariff Reformer, 1906, 1908 and 1910 and Bow and Bromley, 1910. M.P. (Unionist) Sparkbrook, Division of Birmingham, 1911-45. Served WW1, Flanders and the Near East, 1914-6. Assistant Secretary, War Cabinet and Imperial War Cabinet, 1917. On Staff, War Council, Versailles and Secretary of State for War, 1917-8. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919-21. Parl. and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1921-2. First Lord of the Admiralty, Oct.1922-Feb.1924. Secretary of State for the Colonies, Nov. 1924-June 1929. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, July 1925-June 1929. Secretary of State for India and Burma, 1940-5.

ATTLEE, Clement Richard, (1st Earl Attlee) (1883-1967). University College, Oxford. Called to the Bar, Inner Temple. Lecturer, Ruskin College, 1911. Lecturer, London School of Economics, 1913. Served WW1 (Major 1917). Lecturer, London School of Economics, 1919-23. Mayor of Stepney, 1919 and 1920. M.P. (Lab.) Limehouse, 1922-50; West Walthamstow, 1950-5. Parl. Private Secretary to Ramsay MacDonald, 1922-4. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for War, 1924. Member of Indian Statutory Commission, 1927. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1930-1. Postmaster General, 1931. Leader of the Opposition, 1935-40. Lord Privy Seal, 1940-2. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1942-3. Lord President of the Council, 1943-5. Deputy P.M., 1942-5. P.M. and First Lord of the Treasury, 1945-51. Minister of Defence, 1945-6. Leader of the Opposition, 1951-5. Publications include: The Labour Party in Perspective (1937); The Labour Party in Perspective - and Twelve Years Later (1949) and As It Happened (1954).

AVON 1st Earl (Sir (Robert) Anthony EDEN), (1897-1977). Christ Church College, Oxford. Served WW1, 1915-19. Contested Spennymoor Division, Durham, 1922. M.P. (Cons.)

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<sup>1</sup> This appendix is based on a variety of sources including, Who's Who; Who Was Who; The Dictionary of National Biography; The Colonial Office List (which appeared annually from 1862 to 1966, except for the war years of 1941-5 and in the year of paper shortage, 1947), The Foreign Office List; The Imperial Calendar; A.M.H. Kirk-Greene (ed.) A Biographical Dictionary of the British Colonial Service (London, 1991); A.M.H. Kirk-Greene (ed.) A Biographical Dictionary of the British Colonial Governor (London, 1980) and Anne Thurston (ed.) Sources for Colonial Studies in the Public Record Office, Volume 1: Records of the Colonial Office, Dominions Office, Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office (London, 1994).



Warwick and Leamington, 1923-57. Parl. Private Secretary to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Austen Chamberlain, 1926-29. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1931-33. Lord Privy Seal, 1934-5. Minister Without Portfolio for League of Nations Affairs, 1935. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1935-8 (resigned, 1938). Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1939-40. Secretary of State for War, 1940. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1940-5. Leader, House of Commons, 1942-5. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, 1945-51. Chancellor, University of Birmingham, 1945-73. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1951-5. Chairman, O.E.E.C., 1952-4. P.M. and Leader of the Conservative Party, 1955-7. Publications include: Places in the Sun: Foreign Affairs (1939); Full Circle (1960); Facing the Dictators (1962); The Reckoning (1965); Towards Peace in Indo-China (1966) and Another World, 1897-1917 (1976).

BECKETT, Harold (1891-1952). Wadham College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1914. Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919. Secretary, West Indies Currency Committee, 1923. Colonial Office representative on currency questions, Mauritius, 1925. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, West Indies Dept., 1931-1940. Visited Bermuda, Bahamas, Jamaica and British Honduras, 1939. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, East African Dept., 1941-2; West Indies Dept., 1942-51. Retired, 1951.

BEDDINGTON, Jack (1893-1959). Balliol College, Oxford. K.O.Y.L.I., 1914-9. China, 1919-27. Head of Publicity, Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd., 1927-46. Director, Films Division, Ministry of Information, 1940-6. Deputy Chairman, Colman, Prentis and Varley.

BENSON, Arthur Edward Trevor (b.1907). Exeter College, Oxford. Cadet, Northern Rhodesia, 1932. Seconded to Colonial Office, 1939. Seconded to War Cabinet Office, 1940. Reverted Colonial Office, 1943. Secretariat, Northern Rhodesia, 1944. Administrative Secretary, Uganda, 1946. Chief Secretary, Central African Council, 1949, Chief Secretary, Nigeria, 1951. Acting Governor, Nigeria, 1952. Governor, Northern Rhodesia, 1954-9.

BEVIN, Ernest (1881-1951). National Organiser of Dockers' Union, 1910-21. General Secretary, T.G.W.U., 1921-40. Member, General Council T.U.C., 1925-40. M.P. (Lab.) Central Wandsworth, 1940-50 and East Woolwich, 1950-1. Minister of Labour and National Service, 1940-5. Foreign Secretary, 1945-51. Lord Privy Seal, Mar.-Apr. 1951.

BLACKBURNE Sir Kenneth (William) (1907-80). Clare College, Cambridge. Assistant District Officer, Nigeria, 1930. Assistant District Commissioner, Nazareth, Palestine, 1935. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1938. Colonial Secretary, the Gambia, 1941-3. Administrative Secretary to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, 1943-7. Director, Information Services, Colonial Office, 1947-50. Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Leeward Islands,

1950-6. Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief, Jamaica,  
 1957-62. Governor-General, Jamaica, 1962 (retired 1963).  
 Published, Lasting Legacy: a Story of British Colonialism  
 (1976).

BRACKEN, Brendan (1st Viscount of Christchurch) (1901-58).  
 M.P. (Unionist), North Paddington, 1929-45; (Cons.),  
 Bournemouth, Nov. 1945-Feb. 1950; East Bournemouth and  
 Christchurch, 1950-1. Parl. Private Secretary to  
 Churchill, 1940-1. Minister of Information, 1941-5. First  
 Lord of the Admiralty, 1945. Director, Eyre and  
 Spottiswoode Ltd. Chairman, Financial News. Managing  
 Director, the Economist. Director, Associated Electrical  
 Industries. Chairman, Union Corporation. Chairman,  
Financial Times.

BRADLEY, Sir Kenneth (Granville) (1904-77). University  
 College, Oxford. District Officer, Northern Rhodesia,  
 1926-39. Information Officer, Northern Rhodesia, 1939-42.  
 Colonial and Financial Secretary, Falkland Islands, 1942-6.  
 Under-Secretary, Gold Coast, 1946-9 (Acting Secretary, 1946  
 and 1947). Retired, 1949. First Editor, Corona, Colonial  
 Service Journal, 1948-53. Director, Commonwealth  
 Institute, 1953-69. Chairman, League for the Exchange of  
 Commonwealth Teachers, 1962-74. Publications include:  
Africa Notwithstanding (1928); Hawks Alighting (1930);  
Lusaka (1930); Story of Northern Rhodesia (1942); Native  
Courts and Authorities in Northern Rhodesia (1942); Diary  
of a District Officer (1942); The Colonial Service as a  
Career (1950); Copper Venture (1952); Britain's Purpose  
in Africa (1955); Once a District Officer (1966).

BROOKE-POPHAM, Henry Robert Moore, Air Chief Marshall  
 (1878-1953). Royal Military College, Sandhurst.  
 Commissioned into Oxfordshire Light Infantry, 1898. Joined  
 Royal Flying Corps, 1912. Director of Research, Air  
 Ministry, 1919. Commandant, Royal Air Force Staff College,  
 1921. Air Officer Commanding, Air Defence, 1926. Air  
 Officer Commanding, Iraq Command, 1928. Commandant,  
 Imperial Defence College, 1931. Inspector-General, Royal  
 Air Force, 1935. Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle  
 East, 1936. Governor, Kenya, 1937-9. Commander-in-Chief,  
 Far East, 1940. President, Navy Army and Air Force  
 Institute, 1944.

BURNS, Sir Alan Cuthbert Maxwell (1887-1980). St. Edmunds  
 College, Ware. Clerk, Treasury and Customs Department, St  
 Kitts, 1905-1910. Magistrate, Anguilla, 1910-12.  
 Supervisor, Customs, Nigeria, 1912-14. Assistant  
 Secretary, Nigeria, 1914-15. War service, West African  
 Frontier Force, 1915. Colonial Secretary; Acting Governor,  
 Bahamas, 1924-9. Acting Chief Secretary, Nigeria, 1929-34.  
 Governor and Commander-in-Chief, British Honduras, 1934-40.  
 Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, West  
 Indies and Eastern Depts., 1940-1. Governor, Gold Coast,  
 1941-7. Acting Governor, Nigeria, 1942. Permanent UK  
 Representative, UN Trusteeship Council, 1947-56. Chairman,  
 Commission of Inquiry, Land and Population, Fiji, 1959.



Publications include: Nigeria Handbook (1917); History of Nigeria (1929); Colour Prejudice (1948); Colonial Civil Servant (1949); History of the British West Indies (1954); In Defence of Colonies (1957) and Fiji (1963).

BUSHE, Sir (Henry) Grattan (1886-1961). Denstone College. Called to the Bar, 1909. Western and South-Eastern Circuits, 1910-6. Herts and Essex Sessions, 1916. Acting Legal Assistant, Colonial Office, 1917. Assistant Legal Adviser, Dominions Office and Colonial Office, 1919-31. Legal Adviser, Dominions Office and Colonial Office, 1931-41. Governor, Barbados, 1941-6.

BUTLER, Sir Harold Beresford (1883-1951). Balliol College, Oxford. Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford, 1905-12. Entered Civil Service, Local Government Board, 1907. Transferred to Home Office, 1908. Secretary, British Delegation, International Conference on Aerial Navigation, Paris, 1910. Secretary, Foreign Trade Department, Foreign Office, 1916. Secretary, Ministry of Labour, 1917-9. Assistant General Secretary, Labour Commission, Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Secretary-General, International Labour Conference, Washington, 1919. Deputy Director, International Labour Office, 1920-32. Director, International Labour Office, 1932-8. Warden, Nuffield College, Oxford, 1939-43. Commissioner, Civil Defence, Southern Region, 1939-41. Minister, H.M. Embassy Washington, 1942-6.

CADOGAN, Sir Alexander George Montagu (1884-1968). Balliol College, Oxford. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Peking, 1933-5. Ambassador, Peking, 1935-6. Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1936-7. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, Jan. 1938-Feb. 1946. Permanent Representative, H.M. Government at United Nations, New York, 1946-50. Retired from Foreign Service, 1950. Government Director, Suez Canal Company, 1951-7. Chairman, BBC, 1952-7.

CAINE, Sir Sydney (1902-1991). London School of Economics. Entered Colonial Office (from Inland Revenue), 1926. Secretary, West Indian Sugar Commission, 1929. Secretary, UK Sugar Industry Inquiry Committee, 1934. Financial Secretary, Hong Kong, 1937-40. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Economics Dept., 1940-2. Member, Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, 1942. Financial Adviser to Colonial Secretary, 1942-4. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Supplies, Production, Economics, and Finance and Research Depts., 1944-7. Joint Deputy Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 1947-8. Third Secretary, Treasury, 1948. Head of U.K. Treasury and Supply Delegation, Washington, 1949-51. Chief World Bank Mission to Ceylon, 1951. Director, London School of Economics, 1957-67.

CALDER, Sir John Alexander (1889-1974). University of Edinburgh. Entered Colonial Office, 1912. Served WW1, 1918. Principal, Colonial Office, 1920. Secretary, East African Parliamentary Commission, 1924. Assistant

Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Tanganyika and Somaliland Dept., 1933-7; General Dept., 1938; Economic Dept., 1939; General Dept., 1940; Defence Dept., 1941. Principal Assistant Secretary of State, Ministry of Supply, 1942. Third Crown Agent for the Colonies, 1942-3. Second Crown Agent for the Colonies, 1943. Senior Crown Agent for the Colonies, 1943-53. Retired, 1953.

CAMPBELL, Sir Gerald (1879-1964). Trinity College, Cambridge. Vice-Consul, Rio de Janeiro, 1907. Vice-Consul, Belgian Congo, 1908-13. Vice-Consul, Venice, 1913-5. Consul, Addis Ababa, 1915-9. Consul-General, Philadelphia, 1920-1. Consul-General, San Francisco, 1922-31. Consul-General, New York, 1931-8. High Commissioner, Canada, 1938-41. Minister, Washington, 1941 and 1942-5. Director-General, British Information Services, New York 1941-2. Published: Of True Experience (1949).

CARY, (Arthur) Joyce (Lunel) (1888-1957). Trinity College, Oxford. Served Balkan War, Montenegrin Battalion and British Red Cross, 1912-3. Joined Nigerian Political Service, 1913, resigned on ill-health, 1920. Served Cameroons Campaign, Nigerian Regiment, 1915-6. Publications include: Aissa Saved (1932); American Visitor (1933); The African Witch (1936); Castle Corner (1938); Mister Johnson and Power in Men (1939); Charley is my Darling (1940); The House of Children, Herself Surprised and The Case for African Freedom (1941); To Be a Pilgrim (1942); The Process of Real Freedom (1943); The Horse's Mouth (1944); The Moonlight (1946); A Fearful Joy (1949); Prisoner of Grace (1952); Except the Lord (1953); Not Honour More (1955) and The Captive and the Free (1959, posthumous).

CHURCHILL, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer (1874-1965). Sandhurst. Entered Army, 1895. Served with Spanish forces in Cuba, 1895. Served in the Punjab, 1897. Served in Egypt (Battle of Khartoum), 1898. Served in South Africa, and acted as correspondent for Morning Post, 1899-1900. Served WW1, 1914-6. Retired from Army, 1916. M.P. (Cons.) Oldham, 1900-4 and (Lib.) 1904-6; (Lib.) N.W. Manchester, 1906-8; (Lib.) Dundee, 1908-22; (Cons.) Epping, 1924-45; (Cons.) Woodford, 1945-64. Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, 1906-8. President, Board of Trade, 1908-10. Home Secretary, 1910-11. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1911-15. Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster, 1915. Minister of Munitions, 1917-19. Secretary, War and Air, 1919-21. Secretary, Air and Colonies, 1921. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1921-22. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924-29. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1939-40. P.M. and Minister of Defence, 1940-5. Leader of the Opposition, 1945-51. Minister of Defence, 1951-2. P.M., 1951-55. Publications include: The Story of the Malakand Field Force (1898); The River War (1899); Savrola (1900); London to Ladysmith via Pretoria (1900); Ian Hamilton's March (1900); Lord Randolph Churchill (1906); My African Journey (1908); The World Crisis, 4 Volumes (1923-9); My Early Life (1930); The Eastern Front (1931); Thoughts and Adventures (1932); Marlborough: volume 1 (1933), volume 2 (1934), volume 3



(1936) and volume 4 (1938); Great Contemporaries (1937); Arms and the Covenant (Speeches) (1938); Step by Step (1939); Into Battle (Speeches) (1941); The Unrelenting Struggle (Speeches) (1942); The End of the Beginning (Speeches) (1943); Onwards to Victory (Speeches) (1944); The Dawn of Liberation (Speeches) (1945); Victory (1946); Secret Session Speeches (1946); The Sinews of Peace (Speeches) (1948); Painting as a Pastime (1948); Europe Unite (Speeches) (1950); In the Balance (Speeches) (1951); Stemming the Tide (Speeches, 1951-2) (1953); The Unwritten Alliance (1961); The Second World War: Volume 1, The Gathering Storm (1948), Volume 2, Their Finest Hour (1949), Volume 3, The Grand Alliance (1950), Volume 4, The Hinge of Fate (1951), Volume 5, Closing the Ring (1952), Volume 6, Triumph and Tragedy (1954) and A History of the English-Speaking Peoples: Volume 1, The Birth of Britain (1956), Volume 2, The New World (1956), Volume 3, The Age of Revolution (1957), Volume 4, The Great Democracies (1958).

CLAUSON, Sir Gerard Leslie Makins (1891-1974). Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Entered Board of Inland Revenue, 1914. Served WW1, Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Transferred to Colonial Office on retirement from the Army, 1919. Principal, Colonial Office, 1920. Member, British Delegation, for Turkish Peace Conference, Lausanne, 1923. Accredited Representative, Permanent Mandates Commission, League of Nations, various sessions 1926 onwards. Member, Hong Kong Currency Commission, 1931. Member, British Delegation to Imperial Economic Conference, 1932. Member, British Delegation, Monetary and Economic Conference, London, 1933. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, General (Economic) Dept., 1934-8; Social Services Dept., 1939. Member, British Delegation, Imperial Conference, 1937. Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Economic Dept., 1940-6; Commercial Relations and Supplies, Communications, and Marketing Dept., 1947; Commercial Relations and Supplies, Communications, Production and Marketing Depts., 1948; Communications, Economic Relations, Production and Marketing, 1949-51. Member, British Delegation to Hot Springs Conference, 1943. Chairman, International Wheat Conference, 1947. Chairman, International Rubber Conference, 1951. Chairman, Pirelli Ltd., 1960-9. Past President, Royal Asiatic Society. Hon. Vice-President, Royal Archaeological Institute.

COHEN, Sir Andrew Benjamin (1909-68). Trinity College, Cambridge. Harkness (Commonwealth Fund) Fellow, 1939. Entered Inland Revenue, 1932. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1933. Seconded to Malta, 1940-3. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, East and Central Africa Dept., 1943-7. Superintending Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1947. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Africa Division, 1947-51. Governor, Uganda, 1952-7. Permanent British Representative, UN Trusteeship Council, 1957-61. Director General, Department of Technical Cooperation, 1961-4. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Development, 1964-8. Published: British Policy in Changing Africa, (1959).

COLERAINE, (1st Baron of Haltemprice) (Richard Kidston LAW) (1901-80). St. John's College, Oxford. Editorial Staff, Morning Post, 1927; New York Herald Tribune, 1928 and Philadelphia Public Ledger, 1929. M.P. (Unionist) SW Hull, 1931-45; (Cons.) South Kensington, Nov. 1945-Feb 1950; Haltemprice, Kingston-on-Hull, 1950-4. Financial Secretary, War Office, 1940-1. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1941-3. Minister of State, Foreign Office, 1943-5. Minister of Education, 1945. Leader, U.K. Delegation, Hotsprings Conference on Food and Agriculture, 1943. Member, Medical Research Council, 1936-40. Member, Industrial Health Research Board, 1936-40. Chairman, Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad, 1945-54. Chairman, National Youth Employment Council, 1955-62. Chairman, Central Transport Consultative Committee, 1955-8. Honorary Treasurer, British Sailor's Society, 1955-74. Chairman, Marshall Scholarship Committee, 1956-65. Chairman, Standing Advisory Committee on Pay of Higher Civil Service, 1957-61. Chairman, Royal Postgraduate Medical School of London, 1958-71.

CONSTANTINE, (Baron (Life Peer) of Maraval and Nelson), (Learie Nicholas Constantine) (1901-71). Solicitor's Clerk, Trinidad, 1917-22. Civil Servant, Trinidad, 1922-5. Clerk, Oil Company, Trinidad, 1925-9. Professional cricketer, West Indies, 1929-40. A.R.P. Equipment Clerk and Billeting Officer, Nelson, Lancs., 1940-2. Welfare Officer, Ministry of Labour and National Service, 1942-7. Wartime Broadcaster, BBC (Brains Trust) and Lecturer, H.M. Forces, North-West Region. Student, Middle Temple, 1949. Qualified in law, 1954. Called to the Bar, Trinidad, 1955. Assistant to Legal Adviser, Oil Company, Trinidad, 1955-6. Entered local politics; fought election Tunapuna constituency; became Minister of Works and Transport, first Party Government, 1956. High Commissioner, Trinidad Government in London, 1962-4. Member, Sports Council, 1965-71. Governor, BBC, 1968-71.

CRANBORNE, Viscount, (Robert A. GASCOYNE-CECIL) (Lord SALISBURY) (1893-1972). Christ Church, Oxford. M.P. (Unionist), South Dorset, 1929-41. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1935-8. Paymaster General, 1940. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1940-2. Called to the House of Lords as Baron Cecil of Essendon, 1941. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1942. Leader of the House of Lords, 1942-5 and 1951-7. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1943-5. Lord Privy Seal, 1951-2. Chancellor, University of Liverpool, 1951-71. Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 1952. Lord President of the Council, 1952-7. Chairman, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, 1957. Director, Westminster Bank Ltd., 1957-68. Director, British South Africa Company, 1957-61. Trustee, National Gallery, 1959-66.

DARVALL, Frank Ongley (1906-87). Universities of Reading, London and Columbia. President, National Union of Students, 1927-9. Contested (Lab.) Ipswich, 1929. Commonwealth Fund Fellow, 1929-31. Associate Secretary for



International Studies, International Students Service, 1931-2. Director, Geneva Students International Union, 1933. Lecturer, Economics and History, Queens College, Harley Street, 1933-6. Contested (Lab.) King's Lynn, 1935. Director, Research and Discussion, English-Speaking Union, 1936-9. Contested (Lab.) Hythe bye-election, 1939. Deputy Director, American Division, Ministry of Information, 1939-45. British Consul, Denver, 1945-6. First Secretary, H.M. Embassy, Washington, 1946-9. Vice-Chairman, Kinsman Trust, 1949-56. Editor, The English-Speaking World, 1950-3. Director-General, English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth, 1949-57. Chairman, Congress of European-American Association, 1954-7. European Editor, World Review, 1958-9. Honorary Director, U.K. Committee, Atlantic Congress, 1959. Attached British High Commission Cyprus, 1960-2. Director, British Information Services, Eastern Caribbean, 1962-6. Attached British Consulate-General, Barcelona, 1966. Consul, Boston, 1966-8. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1968-70.

DAWE, Sir Arthur (1891-1950). Brasenose College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1918. Deputy Secretary, Imperial Economic Conference, 1923. Secretary, Commission of Inquiry into Affairs of Freetown Municipality, 1926. Secretary, Malta Royal Commission, 1931. Mission to Malta, 1933-4. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Pacific and Mediterranean Depts., 1936-7 and East Africa Dept., 1938. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Africa Division, 1939-44; Middle East and Mediterranean Depts., 1944-5. Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1945-7. Member, British Government delegation to International Labour Conference, 1946. Retired 1947.

DE LA WARR, 9th Earl (Herbrand Edward Dundonald Brassey SACKVILLE) (1900-76). Magdalen College, Oxford. Lord-in-Waiting to the King, 1924 and 1929-31. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, War Office, 1929-30. Parl. Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Deputy Minister of Fisheries, 1930-1 and 1931-5. Mayor of Bexhill, 1932-5. Parl. Secretary, Board of Education, 1935-6. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1936-7. Lord Privy Seal, 1937-8. President, Board of Education, 1938-40. First Commissioner Office of Works and Public Buildings, April-May 1940. Chairman, Agricultural Research Council, 1944-9. Chairman, Estate Committee, National Trust, 1950-1 and 1955-70. Postmaster General, 1951-55. Chairman, Joint East and Central Africa Board, 1955-8. Chairman, Royal Commonwealth Society, 1960.

DICKINSON, Thorold (Barron) (1903-1984). Keble College, Oxford. Entered film industry, 1926. Director, Gaslight (1940); The Next of Kin (1941). Organiser, Army Kinematograph Service Production Group, 1942-3. Director, Men of Two Worlds (1946). Script collaborator, Mayor of Casterbridge and Then and Now. Director, The Queen of Spades (1949); Secret People (1951) and Hill 24 Doesn't Answer, (1955). Producer, Power Among Men, 1958-9 and many films for the UN. Vice-President, Association of Cine-

Technicians, 1936-53. Member, Committee National Film Archive, 1950-6. Chairman, British Film Academy, 1952-3. Member, Committee British Film Institute Experimental Fund, 1952-6. Chief, Film Services Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 1956-60. Senior Lecturer in Film, Slade School of Art, University College, London, 1960-7. Consultant, American Film Institute, 1968. Honorary film consultant, C.N.N.A., 1973-6. Visiting Professor of Film, University of Surrey, 1975-7. Member, Board of New York Film Council, 1958-60. President, International Federation of Film Societies, 1958-66. Honorary Member, Association of Cine and TV Technicians, 1977. Honorary Life Member, British Universities Film Council, 1978-84.

DUDLEY, Sir Alan Alves (1907-71). London School of Economics and University College of Wales. Assistant Director, British Library, New York, 1930-40. Director, British Press Service and British Information Service, New York, 1940-2. Foreign Office, 1942-9 (Head, Information Policy Department, 1946-9). Counsellor, U.K. Delegation, O.E.E.C., Paris, 1949-50. Head, U.N. Social and Economic Department, Foreign Office, 1950-3. Deputy Commissioner-General for U.K., South East-Asia, 1953-6. H.M. Minister, Bucharest, 1956-9. H.M. Minister, U.K. Mission to U.N., 1959-61. Under-Secretary of State, Department of Technical Co-operation, 1961-4.

DUFFERIN AND AVA, 4th Marquess (Basil Sheridan HAMILTON-TEMPLE-BLACKWOOD) (1909-1945). Balliol College, Oxford. Member, Indian Franchise Committee, 1932. Parl. Private Secretary to Lord Lothian, Under-Secretary of State for India, 1932; Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax), President, Board of Education, Nov. 1932 - June 1935; Lord Halifax, Secretary of State for War, June-Nov. 1935; and to Lord Halifax, Lord Privy Seal, 1935-6. Lord-in-Waiting to the King, 1936-7. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, 1937-40. 2nd Lieutenant Royal Horse Guards, 1940. Director, Empire Division, MOI, 1941-2.

EASTWOOD, Christopher Gilbert (1905-83). Trinity College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1927. Private Secretary to High Commissioner, Palestine, 1932-4. Secretary, International Rubber Regulation Committee, 1934. Private Secretary to Colonial Secretaries (Lord Lloyd and Lord Moyne), 1940-1. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, general Dept., 1944 and Middle East Dept., 1944-5. Principal Assistant Secretary, Cabinet Office, 1945-7. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Finance, Research and Production Depts., 1947; Production and Marketing Dept., 1948-51; Production and Marketing and Research Depts., 1952 and West African Dept., 1955. Commissioner of Crown Lands, 1952-4.

EVANS, Sir Harold (1911-83). Editorial Staff, newspapers Worcestershire and Sheffield, 1930-9. Freelance Journalist, 1939-40. British Volunteers in Finland, 1940. Staff, British Legation, Helsinki, 1940-2. Ministry of Information Representative, West Africa, 1942-5. Deputy



Public Relations Officer, Colonial Office, 1945-53. Assistant Secretary of State and Head of Information Department, Colonial Office, 1953-7. Public Relations Adviser to P.M., 1957-64. Head, Information and Research, Independent Television Authority, 1964-6. Public Relations Adviser, Board, Vaqueros Ltd., 1966-76. Chairman, Health Education Council, 1973-6.

FRANKLIN, (Henry) Harry (b.1906). Exeter College, Oxford. Called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn. Inspector, Native Education, Northern Rhodesia, 1928. Provincial Administration, Northern Rhodesia, 1929. Judicial Department, Northern Rhodesia, 1936. Secretariat, Northern Rhodesia, 1940. Information Officer, Northern Rhodesia, 1943. Director of Information, Northern Rhodesia, 1946. Publications include: Unholy Wedlock (1963) and The Flag-Wagger (1974).

FURSE, Major Sir Ralph Dolignon (1887-1973). Balliol, College, Oxford. Assistant Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1910-4. Served, WW1, 1914-8. Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1919-31. Director of Colonial Service Recruitment, 1931-48. Adviser to Secretary of State for the Colonies on Training Courses for Colonial Service, 1948-50. Published: Aucuparius: Recollections of a Recruiting Officer (1962).

GATER, Sir George (1886-1963). New College, Oxford. Assistant Director of Education for Nottinghamshire, 1912-14. Director of Education, Lancashire County Council, 1919-24. Education Officer, London County Council, 1924-33. Clerk of the Council, 1933-9. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1939-47. Seconded as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Security, 1939-40. Secretary, Ministry of Supply, 1940. Secretary, Ministry of Home Security, 1940-2.

GENT, Sir (Gerard) Edward (James) (1895-1948). Trinity College, Oxford. Served WW1, 1914-8. Entered Colonial Office, 1920. Private Secretary to the Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1924. Principal, Colonial Office, 1926. Assistant Secretary, Indian Round Table Conference, 1930. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Eastern Dept., 1939-42. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Eastern, General Defence and Public Relations Depts., 1942-36; Defence, Eastern, Ceylon and Pacific, Communications and Prisoners of War Depts., 1943 and Defence, General, Eastern, Far Eastern Commerce and Prisoners of War Depts., 1944-6. Governor, Malayan Union, 1946-8. High Commissioner, Federation of Malaya, Feb.-July 1948. Died in Office.

GREENWOOD, Arthur (1880-1954). University of Victoria. Head of Department of Economics and Law, Huddersfield Technical College. Lecturer in Economics, University of Leeds. Chairman of the Yorkshire District of the W.E.A. Vice-President of the National W.E.A. General Secretary of the Council for the Study of International Relations.

Assistant Secretary, Reconstruction Committee, 1917. Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Reconstruction, 1917-9. M.P. (Lab.) Nelson and Colne (Lancs), 1922-31. Parl. Secretary to Minister of Health, 1924. Minister of Health, 1929-31. Deputy Leader, Labour Party, 1935. Member, War Cabinet and Minister without Portfolio, 1940-2. Lord Privy Seal, 1945-7. Paymaster-General, 1946-7.

GRINDLE, Sir Gilbert (1869-1934). Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Fellow, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 1891. Entered Local Government Board, 1893. Barrister, Lincoln's Inn, 1895. Entered Colonial Office, 1896. Assistant Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Colonies (Chamberlain), 1898. Principal Clerk, Colonial Office, 1909-16. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1916-25. Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1925-31. Retired, 1931.

GRUBB, Sir Kenneth (George) (1900-80). Missionary, South America, 1923-8. Survey Application Trust, 1928-39 and 1953-80. Involved in planning the establishment of the Ministry of Information, 1939. Controller, Overseas, Ministry of Information, 1941-6. Secretary-General, Hispanic Council, 1946-53. President, Church Missionary Societies, 1944-69. President, Cheltenham Training Colleges, 1948-79. Chairman, Commission of Churches on International Affairs, 1946-68. Church Commissioner, 1948-73. U.K. Delegate, U.N.E.S.C.O., 1954. Publicity Consultant, Rank Organisation, 1955-9. Chairman, Royal Foundation of St. Katherine, 1957-77. U.K. Delegate, Atlantic Congress, 1959. Chairman, Missionary and Ecumenical Council, Church Assembly, 1964-7. Vice-President, Institute of Race Relations, 1965-73. Chairman, British Council of Churches, 1965-8. Publications include: World Christian Handbook (1949, 1953, 1957, 1962 and 1968); A Layman Looks at the Church (1964) and Crypts of Power (1971).

HAILEY, Lord (William Michael Hailey) (1872-69). Corpus Christi, Oxford. Entered Indian Civil Service, 1895. Colonisation Officer, Jhelum Canal Colony, 1902. Chief Commissioner, Delhi, 1912-8. Major, Indian Defence Force, 1912-8. Member, Executive Council of Governor General, Finance and Home Departments, 1919-24. Governor, Punjab, 1924-8. Governor, United Provinces, 1928-30 and 1931-4. Director, African Research Survey, 1935-8. Member, Permanent Mandates, Commission, League of Nations, 1935-9. Chairman, Air Defence Committee, 1937-8. Chairman, Committee for Coordination of Work on Refugees, 1938-9. Head, Economic Mission to Belgian Congo, 1940-1. Chairman, Governing Body of School for Oriental and African Studies, 1941-5. Head, British Delegation to the Institute of Pacific Relations Conference, Mount Tremblant, 1942. Chairman, Colonial Research Committee, 1943-8. President, Royal Central Asian Society, 1943-7. Chairman, London Association of Boy Scouts, 1943-8. Chairman, Governing Body of International African Institute, 1945-7. President, Research Defence Society, 1945-54. Chairman, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1946-58. Member,



Senate, University of London, 1946-8. Member, Rhodes Trust, 1946-66. Deputy Chairman, Royal African Society, 1949-59. Member, General Advisory Council of the BBC, 1953-6. Publications include: An African Survey (1938); Britain and her Dependencies (1943); Future of Colonial Peoples (1943); Great Britain, India and the Colonial Dependencies in the Post-War World (1943); Native Administration in British African Territories (1951); Native Administration in the High Commission Territories, South Africa (1953); Republic of South Africa and the High Commission Territories (1963).

HALIFAX, 1st Earl (Edward Frederick Lindley WOOD) (1881-1959). Christ Church, and All Souls, Oxford. M.P. (Unionist) Ripon Division, West Riding, Yorkshire, 1910-25. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1921-2. President, Board of Education, 1922-4. Minister of Agriculture, 1924-5. Viceroy of India, 1926-31. President, Board of Education, 1932-5. Secretary of State for War, 1935. Lord Privy Seal, 1935-7. Leader of the House of Lords, 1935-8 and 1940. Lord President of the Council, 1937-8. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1938-40. H.M. British Ambassador to Washington, 1941-6.

HALL, George Henry (1st Viscount Hall) (1881-1965). Entered Penrikyber Colliery, 1893. Appointed checkweigher, 1911. Local Agent at South Wales Miners' Federation, 1911-22. M.P. (Lab.), Aberdare Division, Merthyr Tydfil, 1922-46. Civil Lord of the Admiralty, 1929-31. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, 1940-2. Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1942-3. Parl. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1943-5. Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, 1945-6. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1946-51. Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, 1947-51.

HALL, Sir John (Hathorn) (1894-1979). Lincoln College, Oxford. Served WW1, 1914-8. Entered Egyptian Civil Service, Ministry of Finance, 1919. Assistant Principal, Colonial Office, 1921. Principal, Colonial Office, 1922. Seconded to Foreign Office, 1932. Chief Secretary, Palestine, 1933. Resident Minister, Zanzibar, 1937-40. Governor, Aden, 1940-4. Governor, Uganda, 1944-51. Retired, 1951. Director, Midland Bank. Director, Brixton Estate Ltd. Director, Midland Bank executive and Trustee Co. Chairman, Clerical Medical and General Life Assurance Society. Chairman, General Revisionary and Investment Co. Honorary President, Limmer and Trinidad Asphalt Co.

HARLECH, 4th Baron (William George Arthur ORMSBY-GORE) (1885-1964). New College, Oxford. Served 1914-18 war including active service in Egypt and Intelligence Officer, Arab Bureau, Oct. 1916. M.P. (Unionist) Denbigh District, 1910-18 and for Stafford, 1918-38. Parl. Private Secretary to Lord Milner, and Assistant Secretary, War Cabinet, 1917-8. Assistant Political Officer, Palestine, 1918. Member, British Delegation, Paris Peace Conference (Middle East Section), 1919. British Representative, Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations and Member, Colonial

Office Mission to the West Indies, 1921-2. Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1922-4 and Nov. 1924-9. Chairman, East African Parliamentary Commission, 1924. Trustee, National Gallery, 1927-34 and 1936-41. Post-Master General, 1931. First Commissioner of Works, 1931-6. Trustee, Tate Gallery, 1931-8 and 1945-53. Chairman, Advisory Council, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1933. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1936-8. President, National Museum of Wales, 1937. Elected Trustee, British Museum, 1937. Chairman, Governing Body, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1938-41. Lord-Lieutenant Merionethshire, 1938-57. Constable, Harlech Castle, from 1938. North-East Regional Commissioner for Civil Defence, Sept. 1939 - March 1940. U.K. High Commissioner for Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, 1941-44. Pro-Chancellor, University of Wales, 1945-57. Director, Bank of West Africa and Midland Bank Ltd.

HARLOW, Vincent Todd (1898-1961). Brasenose College, Oxford. Temporary Commission, Royal Field Artillery, 1917-9. Assistant Lecturer in Modern History, University College, Southampton, 1923-7. Lecturer in Modern History, University College, Southampton, 1926-7. Keeper, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, 1928-38. Beit Lecturer in Colonial History, Oxford, 1930-5. Rhodes Professor of Imperial History, Kings College, University of London, 1938-48. Colonial Section, Empire Division, Ministry of Information, 1939-43. Head, Empire Information Service, Ministry of Information, 1943-6. Beit Professor of History of the British Commonwealth and Fellow, Balliol College, Oxford, 1948-61. Chairman, History and Administration Committee of the Colonial Social Science Research Council. Commissioner, Constitutional Reform, British Guiana, 1950-1. Constitutional Consultant, Sudan Government, 1951-2. Crown Member, Governing Body, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1958-61. Vice-President, Royal Commonwealth Society, 1958-61. Member, Board of Governors, Commonwealth Institute, 1958-61. Corresponding Member, Indian Historical Records Commission, 1958. Anglican Member, British Council of Churches, 1958. Publications include: Voyages of Captain Jackson (1923); West Indies and Guiana, 1623-67 (1926); History of Barbados (1927); Christopher Codrington (1928); Critical Edition of Raleigh's Discoverie of Guiana (1928); Raleigh's Last Voyage (1932); Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-93, vol.I (1952); New Continents, and Changing Values, vol.II (1965, posthumous).

HINDEN, Rita (1909-71). London School of Economics. Secretary, Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1940-50. Member, Colonial Labour Advisory Committee and Colonial Economic Development Council, 1948-51. Member, British Guiana Constitutional Commission, 1950-1. Editor, Socialist Commentary, 1950-72. Publications include: Plan for Africa (1941); (with Arthur Creech Jones q.v.) Colonies and International Conscience (1945); Fabian Colonial Essays (ed., 1945); Empire and After (1949) and Common Sense and Colonial Development (1949).



HODSON, Henry Vincent (Harry) (b.1906). Balliol College Oxford. Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford, 1928-35. Assistant Editor, Round Table, 1931. Editor, Round Table, 1934-9. Director, Empire Division, Ministry of Information, 1939-41. Reforms Commissioner, Government of India, 1941-2. Principal Assistant Secretary, later Head, Non-Munitions Division, Ministry of Production, 1942-5. Assistant Editor, Sunday Times, 1946-50. Editor, Sunday Times, 1950-61. Provost of Ditchley, 1961-71. Sole Partner, Hodson Consultants, 1971-. Editor, Annual Review Of World Events, 1973-88. Consultant Editor, The International Foundation Directory, 1974-89. Consultant Editor, Annual Review of World Events, 1988-93. Publications include: Economics of Changing World (1933); Slump and Recovery, 1929-37 (1938); The British Commonwealth and the Future (1939); Twentieth Century Empire (1948); Problems in Anglo-American Relations (1963); The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan (1969) and The Diseconomies of Growth (1972).

HUXLEY, Elspeth Josceline (b.1907). University of Reading and Cornell University. Assistant Press Officer, Empire Marketing Board, 1929-32. Liaison Officer, BBC and Colonial Office, 1943. Member, BBC's General Advisory Council, 1952-59. U.K. Independent Member of the Monckton Advisory Committee on Central Africa, 1959. Publications include: White Man's Country (1935); Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya (1935); Murder at Government House (1937); Murder on Safari (1938); The African Poison Murders (1939); Red Strangers (1939); Atlantic Ordeal (1943); (with Margery Perham q.v.) Race and Politics in Kenya (1944); The Walled City (1948); The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1948); I Don't Mind If I Do (1951); Four Guineas (1954); A Thing to Love (1954); The Red Rock Wilderness (1957); The Flame Trees Of Thika (1959); A New Earth (1960); The Mottled Earth (1962); The Merry Hippo (1963); Forks and Hope (1964); A Man From Nowhere (1964); Black Street New World (1965); Brave New Victuals (1965); Their Shining Eldorado: A Journey Through Australia (1967); Love Among the Daughters (1968); The Challenge of Africa (1971); Livingstone and His African Journeys (1974); Florence Nightingale (1975); Gallipot Eyes (1976); Scott of the Antarctic (1977); Nellie: Letters from Africa (1980); Whipsnade: Captive Breeding for Survival (1981); The Prince Buys the Manor (1982); (with Hugo van Lawick) Last Days In Eden (1984); Out In the Midday Sun: My Kenya (1985); Nine Faces Of Kenya (1990); Peter Scott: Painter and Naturalist (1993).

HUXLEY, Gervas (1894-1971). Balliol College, Oxford. Served WW1, 1914-8 (MC, despatches twice). Alfred Booth Shipping Company, 1919. Secretary, Publicity Committee, Empire Marketing Board, 1926-32. Tour of Dominions with Leo Amery, 1927. Ceylon Tea Association, 1932. Organising Director and Vice-Chairman, International Tea Market Expansion Board, 1935-67. Adviser to Minister of Information on Empire Publicity, 1942. Director, Empire Division, Ministry of Information, 1943. Adviser to Minister of Information on relations with American Forces,

1943-5. Honorary Adviser on public relations to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1947-63. Member, Executive Committee, British Council, 1953-64. Commissioner, National Parks Commission, 1954-66. Chairman, Inquiry into the Information Department, Uganda, 1958. Published: Both Hands (1970).

JEFFRIES, Sir Charles Joseph (1896-1972). Magdalan College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1917 after being invalided from Army. Principal, Colonial Office, 1920. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Personnel (Colonial Service) Dept., 1930-9. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Personnel Division, 1940-2; Colonial Service, Colonial Development and Social Services Depts., 1942; Colonial Service and Welfare Depts., 1943; Colonial Service, General, Ceylon and Pacific Depts., 1944-7. Executive Committee of British Council, 1941. Joint Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1947-56. Retired 1956. Publications include: The Colonial Office (1956); Transfer of Power: Problems of the Passage to Self-Government (1960) and Whitehall and the Colonial Service: an Administrative Memoir, 1936-56 (1972).

JONES, Arthur Creech (1891-1964). National Secretary, Transport and General Workers Union 1919-29. Governor, Ruskin College, Oxford, 1923. Organising Secretary, Workers Travel Association, 1929-39. M.P. (Lab.), Shipley Division of Yorkshire, 1935-50 and Wakefield, 1954-64. Member, Executive, Anti-Slavery Society, 1938-54. Parl. Private Secretary to Minister of Labour and National Service, Ernest Bevin, 1940-5. Co-founder and Chairman, Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1940-5. Member, Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 1936-45. Vice-Chairman, Higher Education Commission to West Africa, 1943-4. Chairman, Labour Party Advisory Committee on Labour Questions, 1944-5. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, for Colonial Affairs, 1945-6. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1946-50. U.K. Delegate to the U.N., 1946 and 1947-8. Chairman, British Council of Pacific Relations, 1952-4. Publications include: (with Rita Hinden q.v.) Colonies and International Conscience (1945) and New Fabian Colonial Essays (ed. 1959).

KEITH, John Lucien (1895-1988). Hertford College, Oxford. British South Africa Company, Northern Rhodesia, 1918-25. District Officer, Colonial Service, Northern Rhodesia, 1925-38. Acting Director, African Education, Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1. African Research Survey, Chatham House, 1938-9. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1939. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Welfare Dept., 1943-51 and Students Dept., 1952-7. Adviser on student affairs, West Nigeria Office, 1957-62. London Representative, University of Ife, Nigeria, 1962-72.

LINDSAY, Sir Harry Alexander Fanshawe (1881-1963). Worcester College, Oxford. Under-Secretary, Bengal Government, 1910-2. Under-Secretary, Commerce and Industry Dept., Government of India, 1912-5. Director General, Commercial Intelligence, Calcutta, 1916-21. Secretary to



Government of India, Commerce Dept., 1922. Government of India Trade Commissioner, London, 1923-34. Delegate, for India, Economic Committee, League of Nations, 1924-34. Adviser, Indian Delegation, Imperial Economic Conference, Ottawa, 1932. Director, Imperial Institute, 1934-53. Member, Council of Festival of Britain, 1951. Past-Chairman, Council, Royal Society of Arts. Past-President, Royal Geographical Society.

LISTOWEL, 5th Earl of (William Francis HARE) (b.1906). Balliol College Oxford and University of London. Member (Lab.) London County Council for Lewisham, 1937-46. Whip of Labour Party in House of Lords, 1941-44. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, India and Burma, and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, 1944-5. Postmaster General, 1945-7. Secretary of State, India (Apr.-Aug. 1947) and Burma (Apr. 1947- Jan.1948). Minister of State, Colonial Office, 1948-50. Joint Parl. Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1950-1. Member (Lab.) London County Council for Battersea North, 1952-7. Governor-General, Ghana, 1957-60. Chairman of Committees, House of Lords, 1965-76.

LLOYD, 1st Baron (George Ambrose Lloyd) (1879-1941). Cambridge. Honorary Attache to H.M. Embassy at Constantinople; Special Commissioner for H.M.G. to enquire into and report on the future of British trade in Turkey, Mesopotamia and Iraq, 1908. M.P. (Unionist) West Staffordshire, 1910-8. Served in European War in Egypt, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and the Hedjaz, (with T.E. Lawrence), 1914-8. Governor of Bombay, 1918-23. M.P. (Cons.) Eastbourne, 1924-5. High Commissioner for Egypt, 1925-9. President, Navy League, 1930. Chairman, Near East Committee, British Council, 1935-7. Chairman, British Council, 1937-41. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1940-1.

LLOYD, Sir Thomas Ingram Kynaston (1896-1968). Caius College, Cambridge. Assistant Principal, Ministry of Health, 1920. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1921. Principal, Colonial Office, 1929. Secretary, Palestine Commission, 1929-30. Secretary, West Indies Royal Commission, 1938-9. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Personnel Dept., 1940; Colonial Service Dept., 1941 and Defence Dept., 1942. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, General, Social Services, West Indies and Public Relations Depts., 1943; Social Services, West Indies Public Relations and Communications, 1944-6 and Eastern and Prisoners of War, 1947. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1947-56. Retired, 1956.

LOTHIAN, 11th Marquess (Philip Henry KERR) (1882-1940). New College, Oxford. Assistant Secretary, Inter-colonial Council of Transvaal and Orange River Colony and Railway Committee of Central South African Railways, 1905-8. Secretary, Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1907-8. Editor, The State, South Africa, 1908-9. Editor, Round Table, 1910-6. Secretary to PM, 1916-21. Director, United Newspapers Ltd., 1921-2. Secretary, Rhodes Trust, 1923-39.

Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster, 1931. Parl. Under-Secretary, India Office, 1931-2. Chairman, Indian Franchise Committee, 1932. H.M. British Ambassador in Washington, 1939-40.

MacDONALD, Malcolm John (1901-1981). Queen's College, Oxford. Member, London County Council, 1927-30. M.P. (Lab), 1929-31; (Nat. Lab.), 1931-5 for Bassetlaw Division of Notts; (Nat. Govt.), Ross and Cromarty, 1936-45. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Dominions Office, 1931-5. Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs, 1935-8 and 1938-9. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1935 and 1938-40. Minister of Health, 1940-1. U.K. High Commissioner in Canada, 1941-6. Governor General, Malayan Union and Singapore, May-July 1946. Governor General, Malaya, Singapore and British Borneo, 1946-8. Commissioner General for U.K. in South East Asia, 1948-55. Rhodes Trustee, 1948-57. Chancellor, University of Malaya, 1949-61. Governor, Kenya, 1963-4. High Commissioner, Kenya, 1964-5. Special Representative of H.M.G. in East and Central Africa, 1967-9. Special Envoy to the Sudan, November 1967 and to Somalia, December 1967. Chancellor, University of Durham, 1970. President, Royal Commonwealth Society, 1971. President, Great Britain-China Centre, 1972. President, Federation of Commonwealth Chambers of Commerce, 1971. President, V.S.O., 1975. President, Britain Burma Society, 1980.

MacDOUGALL, David Mercer (b.1904). University of St. Andrews. Entered Hong Kong Civil Service as a Cadet, 1928. First Clerk Magistracy, 1931. District Officer, South Hong Kong, 1933-4. J.P., 1934. Third Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, 1935. Second Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, 1936. Seconded to Colonial Office, Assistant Principal, 1937-9. Department of Information and Far Eastern Bureau, Ministry of Information, 1939-41. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1942. Attached to British Embassy in Washington as Colonial Adviser to H.M. Ambassador, 1942-3. Director, British Political Welfare Mission, San Francisco, 1943-4. Attached to Hong Kong Planning Unit, Colonial Office, 1944. Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, 1946. Officer Administering the Government of Hong Kong, May-July, 1947.

McLEAN, Sir William Hannah (1877-1967). University of Glasgow. Entered Sudan Civil Service, 1906; planned city of Khartoum under Kitchener. Transferred to Egyptian Civil Service as Engineer-in-Chief, 1913; planned city of Alexandria and protective town planning scheme for old city of Jerusalem and Holy Places. Retired from Egyptian Civil Service, 1926. University of Glasgow, economic and technical research in regional planning, 1926. M.P. (Cons.), Tradeston Division of Glasgow, 1931-5. Chairman, Town Planning Institute, Scottish Branch, 1932-3. Member, Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 1932-8. Member, Secretary of State's Educational Commission to East Africa, 1937 and to Malaya, 1938. Colonial Office Representative, New York World's Fair, 1939. Honorary liaison officer with members of Houses of Lords and Commons on Colonial Office's development work since 1931. Colonial



Office Representative, International Colonial Conference, Brussels, 1949. Member of Council, Royal Empire Society, 1949-52.

MACMILLAN, Harold (1894-1987). Balliol College, Oxford. Served WW1, 1914-18. A.D.C., Governor-General, Canada, 1919-20. M.P. (Unionist), Stockton-on-Tees, 1924-29 and 1931-45; (Cons.), Bromley, 1945-64. Parl. Secretary, Ministry of Supply, 1940-2. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1942. Resident Minister, Allied H.Q. North West Africa, 1942-5. Secretary of State for Air, 1945. Minister of Housing and Local Government, 1951-4. Minister of Defence, 1954-5. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Apr.-Dec. 1955. Vice-President, France-British Society, 1955. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1955-7. P.M., 1957-63. Chancellor, University of Oxford, 1960. First President, Game Research Association, 1960-5. President, Macmillan Ltd., 1974. Publications include: Industry and the State (1927); Reconstruction: a Plea for a National Policy (1933); Planning for Employment (1935); The Next Five Years (1935); The Middle Way (1938); Economic Aspects of Defence (1939); Memoirs: Volume 1, Winds of Change, (1966), Volume 2, The Blast of War (1967), Volume 3, Tides of Fortune (1969), Volume 4, Riding the Storm, 1956-59 (1971), Volume 5, Pointing the Way, 1959-61 (1972), Volume 6, At the End of the Day, 1961-63 (1973); Past Masters (1975) and War Diaries: politics and War in the Mediterranean, January 1943-May 1945 (1984).

MACMILLAN, Baron (Hugh Pattison Macmillan) (1873-52). Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Advocate, Scottish Bar, 1897. Examiner in Law, University of Glasgow, 1899-1904. Editor, Juridical Review, 1900-7. Assistant Director of Intelligence, Ministry of Information, 1918. Senior Legal Assessor, City of Edinburgh, 1920-4. Lord Advocate of Scotland, 1924. Lord Appeal in the Ordinary, 1930-9, 1941-6. Chairman, Committee on Industry and Trade, 1930. Minister of Information, 1939-40.

MAIR, Professor Lucy Philip (1901-86). Newnham College, Cambridge. Assistant Lecturer, London School of Economics, 1927-32. Lecturer, London School of Economics, 1932-46. Reader, London School of Economics, 1946-63. Professor of Applied Anthropology, London School of Economics, 1963-8. Lugard Memorial Lecture, African Institute, 1958. Gildersleeve Visiting Professor, Barnard College, Columbia University, 1965. Honorary Professor, Social Anthropology, University of Kent, 1974-9. Vice-President, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1978-9. Publications include: An African People in the Twentieth Century (1934); Native Policies in Africa (1936); Welfare in the British Colonies (1944); Australia in New Guinea (1948); Primitive Government (1962); New Nations (1963); An Introduction to Social Anthropology (1966); The New Africa (1967); Witchcraft (1969); Marriage (1971); African Societies (1974); African Kingdoms (1977).

MALVERN, (1st Viscount of Rhodesia and Bexley) (Godfrey Martin HUGGINS) (1883-1971). St. Thomas's Hospital. House

Physician and Medical Superintendent, Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. Emigrated to Southern Rhodesia, 1911. General Practitioner and Surgeon, Southern Rhodesia, 1911-21. Served 1914-8 war. Member, Legislative Assembly, Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury North, 1923-33; Salisbury District, 1934-9; Salisbury North, 1939-53; Salisbury Suburbs (Federal), 1953-8. Minister of Native Affairs, 1933-49. Minister of Defence, 1948-56. P.M., Southern Rhodesia, 1933-53. P.M., Central African Federation, 1953-6. Director, Merchant Bank of Central Africa; Rothman's (of Pall Mall) Rhodesia Ltd.

MAYBIN, Sir John Alexander (1889-1941). University of Edinburgh. Cadet, Ceylon Civil Service, 1914. Police Magistrate, Ceylon. Assistant Colonial Secretary, Ceylon, 1924. Chief Secretary, Nigeria, 1934. Acting Governor, Nigeria, 1935. Governor, Northern Rhodesia, 1938-41.

MITCHELL, Sir Philip Euen (1890-1964). Trinity College, Oxford. Assistant Resident, Nyasaland, 1912. Lieutenant, King's African Rifles, 1915. A.D.C. and Private Secretary to Governor, Nyasaland, 1918. Assistant Political Officer, Tanganyika, 1919. Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs, Tanganyika, 1926. Provincial Commissioner, Tanganyika, 1928. Chief Secretary, Tanganyika, 1934. Governor, Uganda, 1935-40. Political Adviser on conquered Italian territories in Africa to Field-Marshal Wavell, 1941. British Plenipotentiary in Ethiopia and Chief Political Officer to G.O.C. East Africa, in rank of Major-General, 1942. Governor, Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1942-4. Governor, Kenya, 1944-52. Retired, 1952. Publications include: African Afterthoughts (1954).

MOORE, Henry (Monck-Mason) (1887-1964). Jesus College, Cambridge. Entered Ceylon Civil Service as a Cadet, 1910. Assistant Colonial Secretary, Ceylon, 1914. Salonika campaign, 1916. Assistant Colonial Secretary, Ceylon, 1919. Private Secretary to Governor, Ceylon, 1920. Colonial Secretary, Bermuda, 1922. Principal Assistant Secretary, Nigeria, 1924. Deputy Chief Secretary, Nigeria, 1927. Colonial Secretary, Kenya, 1929. Acting Governor, Kenya, 1930. Governor, Sierra Leone, 1934-7. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Economic, West Indies and Eastern Depts., 1938-9. Governor, Kenya, 1940-44. Governor, Ceylon, 1944-9 (Governor-General, 1948-9). Retired, 1949.

MORGAN, William Stanley (1908-86). Queen's College, Cambridge. Malayan Education Service, 1931-50. Seconded to Colonial Office, temporary Administrative Officer, Public Relations Department, 1943. Secretary, Commission on University Education in Malaya, 1947. Seconded to Colonial Office, 1947-50. Colonial Administrative Service, 1950-7. Ministerial Secretary, Sierra Leone, 1950-7. Assistant Advisor to Qatar Government, 1957-60. Chairman, Public and Police Service Commissions, Mauritius, 1960-9.

MORRISON, Herbert Stanley (Baron Morrison of Lambeth) (1888-1967). Secretary to London Labour Party, 1915-47.



Mayor of Hackney, 1920-1. Member, London County Council, 1922-45 (Leader, 1934-40). M.P. (Lab.), South Hackney, 1923-24, 1929-31 and 1935-45; East Lewisham, 1945-51 and South Lewisham, 1951-9. Minister of Transport, 1929-31. Minister of Supply, 1940. Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, 1940-5. Member of War Cabinet, 1942-5. Deputy Prime Minister, 1945-51. Lord President of the Council and Leader, House of Commons, 1945-51. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1951. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, 1951-5.

MOYNE, Lord (Walter Edward GUINNESS) (1880-1944). Served South Africa, 1900-1. M.P. (Unionist), Bury St. Edmunds, 1907-31. Member, London County Council, 1907. Served WW1, 1914-8. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, War Office, 1922-3. Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1923-4. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1925-9. Financial Mission to Kenya, 1932. Chairman, Departmental Committee on Housing, 1933. Chairman, West Indies Royal Commission, 1938-9. Joint Parl. Under-Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, 1940-1. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1941-2. Leader, House of Lords, 1941-2. Deputy Minister of State, Cairo, 1942-4. Resident Minister, Cairo, 1944. (Assassinated).

NICOLSON, Hon. Sir Harold (George) (1886-1968). Balliol College, Oxford. Entered Foreign Office, 1909. H.M. Embassy, Madrid, 1910; Constantinople, 1911. Transferred to Foreign Office, 1914. Served on British Delegation to Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Joined League of Nations, 1919. Returned to Foreign Office becoming First Secretary, Diplomatic Service, 1920. Counsellor, Foreign Office, 1925. Appointed to H.M. Legation, Tehran, 1925; H.M. Embassy, Berlin, 1927. Resigned, 1929. Editorial Staff, Evening Standard, 1930. Contested, (New Party) Combined Universities, 1931. M.P. (Nat. Lab.), W. Leicester, 1935-45. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Information, 1940-1. Governor, BBC, 1941-6. Joined Labour Party, 1947. Trustee, National Portrait Gallery, 1948-64. President, Classical Association, 1950-1. Chairman, London Library, 1952-7. Publications include: Paul Verlaine (1921); Sweet Waters (1921); Tennyson (1923); Byron, the Last Journey (1924); Swinburne (1926); Some People (1927); Development of English Biography (1928); Lord Carnock (1930); People and Things (1931); Public Faces (1932); Peacemaking, 1919 (1933); Curzon: the Last Phase (1934); Dwight Morrow (1935); Small Talk (1937); Helen's Tower (1937); Diplomacy (1939); Marginal Comment (1939); Why Britain is at War (1939); The Desire to Please (1943); Friday Mornings (1944); Some People (1944); Another World Than This (anthology with Vita Sackville West) (1945); The Congress of Vienna (1946); The English Sense of Humour (1947); Comments (1948); Benjamin Constant (1949); King George V: His Life and Reign (1952); Evolution of Diplomatic Method (1954); Good Behavior (1955); Sainte-Beuve (1957); Journey to Java (1957); The Age of Reason (1960) and Monarchy (1962).

NORTHCOTE, Sir Geoffrey Alexander Stafford (1881-1948). Balliol College, Oxford. Assistant Collector of Taxes,



East African Protectorate, 1904. District Officer, East Africa, 1909. Assistant Colonial Secretary, East Africa, 1921. Chief Secretary, Northern Rhodesia, 1928-30. Colonial Secretary, Gold Coast, 1930-4. Governor and Commander-in-Chief, British Guiana, 1935-6. Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Hong Kong, 1937-41. Principal Information Officer, East Africa, 1941-5.

NORWICH, (1st Viscount of Aldwick) (Alfred Duff COOPER) (1890-1954). New College, Oxford. Served European War, 1914-9. M.P. (Unionist), Oldham, 1924-9; (Cons.), St. George's Division of Westminster, 1931-45. Financial Secretary, War Office, 1928-9 and 1931-4. Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1934-5. Secretary of State for War, 1935-7. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1937-8. Minister of Information, 1940-1. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1941-3. Representative, H.M. Government with French Committee of National Liberation, 1943-4. H.M. Ambassador to France, 1944-7. Publications include: Talleyrand (1932); Haig (1935); The Second World War (1939); David (1943); Sergeant Shakespeare (1949); Operation Heartbreak (1950) and Old Men Forget (1953).

OLIVIER, 1st Baron (Sydney Olivier) (1859-1943). Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1882. Secretary, Fabian Society, 1886-90. Acting Colonial Secretary, British Honduras, 1890-1. Auditor-General, Leeward Islands, 1895-6. Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1896-7. Secretary, West India Royal Commission, 1897. Sent to Washington to assist in reciprocity negotiations on behalf of West Indian Colonies, 1898. Colonial Secretary, Jamaica, 1899-1904 and Acting Governor, 1900, 1902 and 1904. Principal Clerk, West African and West Indian Departments, Colonial Office, 1904-7. Governor, Jamaica, 1907-13. Permanent Secretary, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1913-7. Assistant Comptroller and Auditor of the Exchequer, 1917. Retired, 1920. Secretary of State for India, 1924. West Indian Sugar Commission, 1929-30. Published: Jamaica: the Blessed Island (1941).

PARKINSON, Sir Cosmo (1884-1967). Magdalen College, Oxford. Entered Admiralty, 1908. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1909. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, East African Dept., 1925-31. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Middle East Dept., 1932 and Middle East and West Indies Depts., 1933-7. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1937-40. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Dominions Office, Feb. 1940. Acting Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, May 1940. Seconded for special duty in colonies, 1942. Retired, Dec. 1944 and re-employed on special duty for the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Jan.-Sept. 1945. Published: The Colonial Office from Within, 1909-45, (1947).

PASKIN, Sir (Jesse) John (1892-1972). St. John's College, Cambridge. Served European War, 1914-8. Assistant Principal, Ministry of Transport, 1920. Transferred to



Colonial Office, 1921. Assistant Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1927-9. Principal, Colonial Office, 1929. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, East African Dept., 1939. Principal Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1939-40. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Colonial Development and Social Services Dept., 1941; Eastern Dept., 1942-7. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Hong-Kong and Pacific and South East Asia Depts., 1948-54. Retired, 1954.

PEDLER, Frederick J. (b.1908). Caius College, Cambridge. Entered Colonial Office, 1930. Seconded to Tanganyika, 1934. Secretary, Commission on Higher Education in East Africa and the Sudan, 1937. Secretary to the Lord Privy Seal, 1938. Secretary to Lord Hailey in Africa, 1939-40. Chief British Economic Representative, Dakar, 1942. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Economic and Finance Department, 1944; Appointments Dept., 1945-7. Joined United Africa Company, 1947; Director, 1951 and Deputy Chairman, 1965-8. Director Unilever Ltd. and NV, 1956-68. Chairman, Council for Technical Education and Training for Overseas Countries, 1962-73. Treasurer, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1969-81.

PERHAM, Dame Margery (1895-1982). St. Hugh's College, Oxford. Lecturer in History, University of Sheffield, 1917-24. Visited Somaliland, 1921-2. Fellow and Tutor in Modern History, St. Hugh's College, Oxford, 1924-30. Lectured to Colonial Cadets in Oxford, 1928-63. Awarded Rhodes Trust travelling Fellowship and travelled to the US, the Pacific and East Africa, 1929-30. Visited Nigeria and the Cameroons, 1931-2. Research Lecturer in Colonial Administration, University of Oxford, 1935-9. Visited East Africa and the Sudan, 1936-8. Vice-Chairman, Oxford Summer Courses on Colonial Administration, 1937 and 1938. Official Fellow of Nuffield College, 1939-63. Reader in Colonial Administration, University of Oxford, 1939-48. Member, Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 1939-45. Director, Nuffield College, Colonial Studies Project, 1941-7. Member, Asquith Committee on Higher Education in the Colonies, 1943. Member, Irvine Commission on Higher Education in the West Indies, visited the West Indies and the US, 1944. Director, Institute of Colonial Studies, University of Oxford, 1945-8. Member, Executive Committee of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (Overseas), 1946-66. Member, Inter-University Council for higher education in the Colonies (Overseas), 1946-71. Attended and spoke at the Colonial Office (Cambridge) Summer Schools on African Administration, 1947-63. Fellow in Imperial Government, Nuffield College, 1948-63. Visited Uganda and the Sudan, advised on the training of Sudanese administrative officers, 1948. Member, Colonial Office Committee of Enquiry into Constitutional Development in the Smaller Colonial Territories, 1949. Member, Standing Committee of the Colonial Social Science Research Council, 1949-61. Retired from teaching at Oxford, 1963. Elected



first President of the African Studies Association of the U.K., 1963. President, Universities Mission to Central Africa, 1963-4. Chairman, Oxford University Colonial Records Project, 1963-72. Travelled to Nigeria to investigate the Nigerian Civil War, 1968. Publications include: Major Dane's Garden (1925); Josie Vine (1927); (with Lionel Curtis) The Protectorates of South Africa (1935); Ten Africans (1936); Native Administration in Africa (1937); Africans and British Rule (1941); (ed. with J. Simmons) African Discovery: an Anthology of Exploration (1942); (with Elspeth Huxley q.v.) Race and Politics in Kenya (1944); The Government of Ethiopia (1948); Lugard: the Years of Adventure, 1858-1898 (1956); The Diaries of Lord Lugard, vols 1-3 (1959); Lugard: the Years of Authority, 1898-1945 (1960); The Colonial Reckoning (1962); (ed. with Mary Bull) The Diaries of Lord Lugard, vol.4 (1963); African Outline (1966); Colonial Sequence, 1930-1949 (1967); Colonial Sequence, 1949-1969 (1970); African Apprenticeship: an Autobiographical Journey in South Africa, 1929 (1974); East African Journey, 1929-30 (1976) and West African Passage: a Journey through Nigeria, Chad and the Cameroons, 1931-2 (published posthumously, edited by A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, 1983).

POYNTON, Sir Arthur Hilton (b.1905). Brasenose College, Oxford. Entered Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1927. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1929. Private Secretary to Minister of Supply and the Minister of Production, 1941-3. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Defence Dept., 1943; Defence and General Dept., 1944; Defence Dept., 1945 and International Relations Dept., 1946. Joint Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1948. Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 1959-66. Member, Court of Governors, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 1965-77. Member, Governing body, S.P.C.K., 1967-72. Treasurer, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1967-76. Director, Overseas Branch, St. John Ambulance, 1968-75.

RADCLIFFE, Baron Cyril John (1899-1977). New College, Oxford. Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford, 1922-37. Called to Bar, 1924. Kings Council, 1935. Director, Press and Censorship, Ministry of Information, 1940. Deputy Director General, Ministry of Information, 1941. Director General, Ministry of Information, 1941-5. Vice-Chairman General, Council of the Bar, 1946-9. Lord of the Appeal in the Ordinary, 1949-64. Chairman, Departmental Committee, British Film Institute, 1946-7. Chairman, Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions, 1947. Chairman, Royal Commission on Taxation of Profits and Income, 1952. Chairman, BBC General Advisory Council, 1952-5. Chairman, British Commonwealth International Newsfilm Agency Trust, 1957-75. Constitutional Commissioner, Cyprus, 1956. Chairman, Committee of Inquiry into the Monetary and Credit System, 1957-9. Chairman, Committee of Inquiry into Procedures and Practices, 1961. Chairman, Tribunal Inquiry into the Vassall Case, 1962. Chairman, Privy Councillors' Inquiry into the Daily Express and D Notices, 1967. Chairman, Privy Councillors' Committee on Memoirs of ex-



ministers, 1975. Chairman, Board of Trustees, British Museum, 1963-8. Chancellor, University of Warwick, 1966-77. Publications include: Not in Feather Beds (1968).

REITH, John Charles Walsham (1889-1971). Royal Technical College, Glasgow. Served five years' engineering apprenticeship in Glasgow. London, engineer with S. Pearson and Son Ltd., 1913. Served WW1, 1914-5. United States, in charge of contracts for munitions for Great Britain, 1916-7. Admiralty, Department of Civil Engineer-in-Chief, 1918. in charge of liquidation of ordnance and engineering contracts for Ministry of Munitions, 1919. General Manager, Wm Beardmore and Co. Ltd., 1920. first General Manager, BBC, 1922; Managing Director, 1923; Director-General, 1927-38. Chairman, Imperial Airways, 1938-9. First Chairman of British Overseas Airways Corporation, 1939-40. M.P. (Nat.) Southampton, 1940. Minister of Information, 1940. Minister of Transport, 1940. first Minister of Works, 1940-2. Extra Naval Assistant to 3rd Sea Lord, 1943. Captain, R.N.V.R., Director of Combined Operations Material Dept., Admiralty, 1943-5. Chairman, Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference, 1945. Chairman, Commonwealth Telecommunications Board, 1946-50. Chairman, New Towns Committee, 1946. Chairman, Hemel Hempstead Development Corporation, 1947-50. Chairman, National Film Finance Corporation, 1948-50. Chairman, Colonial Development Corporation, 1950-9. Director, Phoenix Assurance Co. Ltd, 1953-68. Vice-Chairman, British Oxygen Co. Ltd., 1956-66. Chairman, State Building Society, 1960-4. Lord Rector, Glasgow University, 1965-8. Lord High Commissioner, General Assembly of Church of Scotland, 1967 and 1968. Publications include: Into the Wind (1949) and Wearing Spurs (1966).

RICHARDS, Dr. Audrey Isabel (1899-1984). Newnham College, Cambridge and University of London. Anthropological field work, Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1, 1933-4 and 1957; Northern Transvaal, 1939-40; Uganda, 1950-5. Lecturer, Social Anthropology, London School of Economics, 1931-3 and 1935-7. Senior Lecturer, Social Anthropology, University of Witwatersrand, 1939-41. Temporary Principal, Government Anthropologist, Colonial Office, 1942-5. Reader, Social Anthropology, University of London, 1946-50. Director, East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda, 1950-6. Director, Centre for African Studies, University of Cambridge, 1956-67. Smuts Reader in Anthropology, University of Cambridge, 1961-7. Member, Colonial Research Committee, 1944-7. Member, Colonial Social Science Research Council, 1944-50, 1956-62. Member, Committee for Scientific Research in Africa South of the Sahara, 1954-6. President, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1959-61. President, African Studies Association, 1964-5. Publications include: Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe (1932); Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia (1939); Chisungu, a Study of Girls' Initiation Ceremonies in Northern Rhodesia (1956); East African Chiefs (1960); The Multi-Cultural States of East Africa (1969); Subsistence to Commercial Farming in Buganda



(1973) and (with Jean Robin) Some Elmdon Families (1974).

ROBERTSON, Mrs. E. Arnot (Lady TURNER) (d.1961). Writer, broadcaster and lecturer. Publications include: Cullum (1928); Three Came Unarmed (1929); Four Frightened People (1931); Ordinary Families (1933); Thames Portrait (1937); Summer's Lease (1940); The Signpost (1943); Devices and Desires (1954); Justice of the Heart (1958) and The Spanish Town Papers (1959).

ROBINSON, Prof. Ronald Edward (b.1920). St. John's College Cambridge. Served WW2. Research Officer, African Studies Branch, Colonial Office, 1947-9. Fellow, St. John's College, Cambridge, 1949-71. Lecturer in History, University of Cambridge, 1953-66. Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, 1959-60. Tutor, St. John's College, Cambridge, 1961-6. Member, Bridges Committee, Training in Public Administration, 1961-2. Chairman, Cambridge Conferences on Problems of Developing Countries, 1961-70. Smuts Reader in History of the British Commonwealth, Cambridge, 1966-71. Beit Professor of the History of the British Commonwealth, and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, 1971-87. Chairmen, Faculty Board of Modern History, Oxford, 1974-6, Vice-Chairman, 1976-87. Director, Oxford Development Records Project, 1978-87. U.K. observer, Zimbabwe election, 1980. Publications include: Africa and the Victorians (1961); Developing the Third World (1971); (joint ed.) Bismarck, Europe and Africa (1988); Railway Imperialism (1991).

RUGBY, 1st Baron (John Loader MAFFEY) (1877-1969). Christ Church College, Oxford. Entered Indian Civil Service, 1899. Served Mohamand Field Force, 1908. Political Agent, Khyber, 1909-12. Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar, 1914-5. Deputy Secretary, Foreign and Political Office, Government of India, 1915-6. Private Secretary to Viceroy, 1916-20. Chief Political Officer, Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Field Force, 1919. Chief Secretary to Duke of Connaught, 1921. Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, India, 1921-4. Governor-General of the Sudan, 1926-33. Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1933-7. Director, Imperial Airways, 1937-9. U.K. Representative, Eire, 1939-49. Governor of Rugby School, resigned, 1939.

SABBEN-CLARE, Ernest Elwin (b.1910). New College, Oxford. Assistant Master, Winchester College, 1932-4. Assistant District Officer, Tanganyika, 1935-40. Seconded to the Colonial Office, 1940-7. Colonial Attache, H.M. Embassy, Washington and Commissioner of the Caribbean Commission, 1947-9. Nigerian Government, 1950-5. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Nigeria, 1953-5. Assistant Master, Marlborough College, 1955-60. Editor, Wilts Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, 1956-62. Headmaster, Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, 1960-3. Headmaster, Leeds Grammar School, 1963-70.

SEEL, Sir George Frederick (1895-1976). Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Served European War, 1914-8. Transferred



from Air Ministry to Colonial Office as Assistant Principal, 1922. Principal, Colonial Office, 1929. Secretary, Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission (Bledisloe), 1938-9. Colonial Office Liaison Officer to Ministry of Information, 1939. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, East Africa Department, 1939-41. Seconded to Ministry of Supply, 1941-2. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office Tanganyika and Colonial Service Depts., 1942; East Africa Dept., 1944-5 and Colonial Service Dept., 1946. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, West Africa, East and Central Africa and General Depts., 1947; Eastern, General and West Indies Depts., 1948; Defence and General and West Indies Depts., 1949-50. Comptroller, Development and Welfare, West Indies and British Co-Chairman of Caribbean Commission, 1950-3. Senior Crown Agent, Oversea Governments and Administrations, 1953-9. Chairman, British Leprosy Relief Association, 1962-71.

SELLERS, William (b.1897). College of Technology, Manchester. Served 1914-8 war. Senior Sanitary Superintendent, Nigeria, 1926. Propaganda Officer, Nigeria, 1935. Producer and Head of Colonial Film Unit, Colonial Office, 1939. Expert, U.N.E.S.C.O. seminar, Fundamental Education, 1953.

SCOTT, Sir Herbert Septimus (1873-1952). Hertford College, Oxford. Inspector of Schools, Transvaal, 1902. Secretary, Transvaal Education Department, 1911. Director of Education, Transvaal, 1924. Director of Education, Kenya, 1928-35. Retired, 1935. Member, Committee of Economic Advisory Council on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire. Member, Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education.

SHUCKBURGH, Sir John (Evelyn) (1877-1953). Kings College, Cambridge. Entered India Office, 1900. Private Secretary to Permanent Under-Secretary of State, India Office, 1902. Secretary, Political Department, India Office, 1917. Acting Assistant Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 1921. Assistant Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, 1924; Middle East Dept., 1927-8; Middle East, Ceylon, Mediterranean, 1929-30. Deputy Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, General, West Indies, Eastern, Pacific and Mediterranean Depts., 1931-2; General, Eastern, Pacific and Mediterranean Depts., 1933-7; General, Defence, Pacific and Mediterranean, Colonial Development and Social Services and Middle East Depts., 1941. Retired, 1942. Narrator, Historical Section, Cabinet Office, 1942. Publications include: The India Office List (ed., 1901); An Ideal Voyage and Other Essays (1946) and Colonial Civil History of the War, (unpublished manuscript).

SIMNETT, William Edward (1880-1958). Assistant Editor and Librarian, Institution of Civil Engineers, to 1916. Served European War 1914-8, Royal Engineers and Major, General Staff. Attached to British Delegation, Paris Peace Conference. Director, Ministry of Transport, 1919-21. Secretary, Railways Amalgamation Tribunal, 1921-3. Founder and Editor, Technical Review of the Foreign Press, 1918-20.



Chairman, Colonial Empire Union, 1938-9. Editor, Crown Colonist. Sent by British Government on a special mission to the United States, 1940. Publications include: The British Colonial Empire (1942) and Emergent Commonwealth (1954).

SMUTS, Field Marshal Rt.Hon. Jan Christiaan (1870-1950). Victoria College, Stellenbosch and Christ's College, Cambridge. Practiced at Cape Town Bar, Johannesburg, 1896. State Attorney, South African Republic, 1898. Served Boer War; supreme command of Republican Forces, Cape Colony, 1901. Colonial Secretary, Transvaal, 1907. Commanded troops in British East Africa, 1916-7. Minister of Interior and Minister of Mines, Union of South Africa, 1910-2. Minister of Defence, Union of South Africa, 1910-20. Minister of Finance, Union of South Africa, 1912-3. South African Representative, Imperial War Cabinet, 1917 and 1918. Plenipotentiary (with General Botha) for South Africa at Paris Peace Conference, 1919. P.M. and Minister for Native Affairs, Union of South Africa, 1919-24. Minister of Justice, Union of South Africa, 1933-9. P.M. and Minister of External Affairs and Defence, Union of South Africa, 1939-48. Field Marshal, 1941. G.O.C. Union Defence Forces in the Field, 1940-9.

STANLEY, Oliver Frederick George (1896-1950). Served WW1, 1914-18. Called to Bar, 1919. Contested Edgehill Division of Liverpool, 1923. M.P. (Cons.) Westmoreland, 1924-50. Parl. Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, 1931-3. Minister of Transport, 1933-4. Minister of Labour, 1934-5. President, Board of Education, 1935-7. President, Board of Trade, 1937-40. Secretary of State for War, 1940. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1942-5.

THOMAS, Ambler Reginald (b.1913). Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Appointed, Assistant Principal, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1935. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1936. Assistant Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1938-9. Principal, Colonial Office Tanganyika Department, 1939. Deputy Public Relations Officer, Colonial Office, 1943. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Colonial Service Dept., 1946. Chief Secretary, Government of Aden, 1947-9. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Establishment Dept., 1950-2. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Colonial Service, Student and Coronation Depts., 1952-3; Colonial Service and Students Depts., 1954; Overseas Service and Students Depts., 1955-9; West Indies, Pacific and Indian Ocean, Falkland Islands and Antarctic Depts., 1960-63. Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Overseas Development and Overseas Development Administration, 1964-73. Member, Executive Committee, British Council, 1965-8. Chairman, Commission of Inquiry into Gilbert Islands Development Authority, 1976.

TOMLINSON, Sir George John Frederick (1876-1963). University College, Oxford. President, Oxford Union. Transvaal Education Department, 1903-4. Nigerian Administrative Service, 1907-28. Seconded to Gold Coast,



Director of Education, 1910-11. Acting Secretary, Native Affairs, Nigeria, 1925-7. Lecturer in Hausa, School of Oriental Studies, 1928-30. Member, Committee on Colonial Appointments, 1929-30. Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Personnel Dept., 1930-9. Temporary Clerk, House of Commons, 1940-4. Member, Governing Body, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1940-57.

VERNON, Roland Venables (d.1942). Balliol College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Office, 1900. Special Service, West Indies, 1903. Private Secretary to Lord Denham, Governor-General, Australia, 1911-13. Member, Anglo-French Commission on New Hebrides, 1914. Assistant General Secretary, Ministry of Munitions, 1915-18. Assistant Secretary, Irish National Convention, 1917-8. Deputy Accountant-General, Board of Education, 1920-1. Returned to Colonial Office, 1921. Special Service, Egypt and Palestine, 1921-2. At Lausanne for Turkish Treaty negotiations, 1922-3. British Agent, Permanent Court of International Justice, the Hague, 1925. Financial mission to Iraq for British and Iraqi governments, 1925. Representative of British and Iraqi governments, Ottoman Public Debt negotiations, Paris, 1925. Financial Adviser, Government of Iraq, 1925-8. Member, British Delegation, International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1929, 1930, 1935 and 1936. Retired from Colonial Office, 1937. Chairman, Advisory Committee for East London of Assistance Board, 1938. Member, Governing Body, Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1941.

WADDINGTON, Sir Eubule John (1890-1957). Merton College, Oxford. Cadet, Kenya, 1913. Senior Assistant Secretary, Kenya, 1923. Provincial Commissioner, Kenya, 1928. Colonial Secretary, Bermuda, 1932. Colonial Secretary, British Guiana, 1935. Governor, Barbados, 1938-41. Governor, Northern Rhodesia, 1941-7. Retired, 1947.

WILLIAMS, Sir Edward John (1890-1963). Labour College, London. Secretary, Great Western Collieries, 1909-13. Secretary, Labour College, 1913-5. Member, Glamorgan County Council, 1928-31. Miner's Agent, Garw District, South Wales Miner's Federation, 1919-31. M.P. (Lab.) Ogmore Division of Glamorganshire, 1931-46. Parl. Private Secretary to Under-Secretary for the Colonies, 1940-1. Parl. Private Secretary to Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1942-3. Parl. Private Secretary to Parl. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1943-5. Minister of Information, 1945-6. High Commissioner in Australia, 1946-52. Member, National Industrial Disputes Tribunal, 1953-9.

WILLIAMS, Owen Gwyn Revell (1886-1954). Hertford College, Oxford. Entered Inland Revenue, 1910. Transferred to Colonial Office, 1911. Assistant Secretary of State, Colonial Office, General Dept., 1926-9; Middle East Dept., 1930-7; West African Dept., 1938-46. Retired 1946.

## APPENDIX 2

## THE COLONIAL OFFICE

SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES  
1939-1948

16 May 1938	Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald
13 May 1940	Rt. Hon. Lord Lloyd
8 February 1941	Rt. Hon. Lord Moyne
23 February 1942	Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne
24 November 1942	Rt. Hon. Oliver Stanley
3 August 1945	Rt. Hon. George Hall
7 October 1946	Rt. Hon. Arthur Creech Jones



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Reading

Overseas Broadcasting Files

E1 Country Files

E2 Foreign: General

- ii. Brotherton Library, University of Leeds  
The Tom Harrison Mass Observation Archive  
(microfiche)

- iii. Public Record Office, Kew, Surrey

British Council Files

BW 1 British Council: Registered Files,  
General Series

BW 2 British Council: Registered Files,  
GB Series

BW 4 British Council: Registered Files,  
Film Series

BW 7 British Council: Registered Files,  
East Africa

Cabinet Papers

CAB 21 Cabinet Office: Registered Files

CAB 65 War Cabinet Minutes

CAB 66 War Cabinet Memoranda WP and CP  
Series

CAB 128 Cabinet Minutes from 1945

CAB 129 Cabinet Memoranda from 1945

CAB 130 Ad Hoc Cabinet Committees: General  
& Miscellaneous Series

CAB 134 Cabinet Committees: General  
Series, 1945-51

Colonial Office Files

CO 323 Colonies, General: Original  
Correspondence

CO 525 Nyasaland: Original Correspondence

CO 533 Kenya: Original Correspondence

CO 537 Colonies General Supplementary  
Original  
Correspondence

CO 795 Northern Rhodesia: Original  
Correspondence

CO 822 East Africa: Original  
Correspondence

CO 847 Africa: Original Correspondence

CO 852 Economic: Original Correspondence

CO 859 Social Service: Original  
Correspondence

CO 866 Establishment: Original  
Correspondence

CO 875 Public Relations and Information  
Original Correspondence

CO 878 Establishment Miscellanea, 1794-  
1965

CO 936 International Relations: Original  
Correspondence

CO 967 Private Office Papers

CO 1027 Information Department: Original  
Correspondence

Dominion Office Files

D0 35 Dominion's Office and Commonwealth  
Relation's Office: Original  
Correspondence, 1926 -1961

Foreign Office Files

FO 371 Foreign Office: General  
Correspondence: Political

FO 953 Foreign Publicity

FO 800 Private Collections



Information Files

- INF 1 Ministry of Information: Files of Correspondence
- INF 4 War of 1914 -1918: Information Services
- INF 6 Central Office of Information and predecessors: Film Production Documents
- INF 10 British Empire Collection of Photographs
- INF 12 Central Office of Information: Registered Files

Prime Minister's Office Papers

- PREM 3 Operations Papers, 1938-1946
- PREM 4 Confidential Papers, 1939-1946
- PREM 8 Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1945-1951

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Treasury Files

- T 160 Financial Files

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