

Further <sup>copy</sup> ~~original~~ lodged with Rhodes House library.

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## A Further Note by Donald Barton (2011)

This memo is a sort of extended P.S. to the personal material sent over the years to Rhodes House library. In recent correspondence with the R H Archivist, Lucy McCann, it was thought that - in the context of my previous offerings - it might be of interest if I compiled some notes covering my own background & my attitudes vis a vis Africans in general & "nationalist" politics in the run up to Tanganyika's independence in 1961.

But first a brief diversion on "the District Officer" - fiction & fact. The archetype is perceived as a public school Englishman. Most were indeed English, but supplemented by men from other parts of the UK, with perhaps a disproportionate number of Irishmen, from both the republic & Ulster. In the case of Tanganyika in my time (52-61) there were several Australians, New Zealanders, and S. Africans, 2 S. Rhodesians, 2 Canadians, 1 Anglo-Argentinian, a Maltese, and a Greek Cypriot - indicative of an inclusive recruitment policy.

I assume that pre-WWII most recruits were the product of public schools. Post-war the proportion declined. In the early post-war years a number of D.O.s were recruited on the strength of wartime service, irrespective of educational background, & in some cases without a university degree; the normal requirement was a 2nd class honours degree. Thereafter, with a new generation of university students coming from the state sector - particularly grammar schools - the public school component was further diluted. One's schooling was never a subject of conversation, & there was rarely occasion to refer to it. Of all the D.O.s that I know I can say with certainty that only 3 were ex-public school - though

no doubt others were too. What is certain is that many more of us came from the state sector than formerly. Apropos this, one Nile Gardner wrote a doctoral thesis on this topic in the 1990s, & no doubt a copy is lodged somewhere in the OU archives.

The DO is also probably seen as a product of Oxbridge. Certainly Oxbridge featured large, but not to the exclusion of other universities. And in the post-war period Oxbridge admitted many more students from the state sector than previously - led by an influx of ex-servicemen after the war. So many / most of my younger contemporaries were state-school - Oxbridge.

My personal background.

Born 1927 in Tottington, a small mill town now a northern suburb of Bury, Lancs.

Father a salesman, also representing his cotton-weaving firm on the Manchester Exchange. Lost job in Depression (1930), & we moved south where better prospects of employment. Father also handicapped with chronic bronchitis resulting from war service, loss of lung, & pulmonary TB in army. Only intermittently employed until 1938, when got a clerical post in Ministry of Supply in London. Mother, various secretarial posts from 1937 onwards.

During the Thirties we lived at a number of addresses in & around London, plus 2 years running a sweet shop near Bournemouth, plus 1 year when my sister & I were forced out to grandparents in Lancashire whilst parents disposed of the shop & found employment in London. We attended 4 different primary schools before my mother took sister & I to Chapstow on the outbreak of war in 1939.

1939-45

Secondary education at Chapston Secondary School, a mixed state school with only ca. 250 pupils, & a 6th form rarely reaching a dozen since most pupils chose to leave at 15 after taking the School Certificate exam. Pupil aspirations were low, but a conscientious staff were supportive of the few who aimed at university/professional education. My parents both valued education, & it was taken for granted that sister & I would go on to university if at all possible.

High School Cert., 1945.

1946-8 Military service in the Manchester Regiment: sergeant.

1948-51 St. Catherine's Society, Oxford. Although history had been my favourite subject I chose to read geography, which offered the opportunity to study Africa as a special region, and socio-economic-political problems of tropical colonies; this in hope of entering the Colonial Administrative Service (CAS) & being posted to Africa - an ambition progressively formed from my early teens onwards, ~~by~~ informed by increasingly serious reading. Other options had to be considered of course, but in the event I was offered appointment in Tanganyika, for which I had expressed a preference. Got a "good second", so back to Oxford (51-52) for the 1st Jernshire Course - an introduction to work in the CAS, with emphasis on law & language (Swahili).

At the time I applied to join the CAS, the Colonial Office's recruitment literature & associated booklets were quite clear as to what our purpose was - to prepare colonies for independence by establishing effective & increasingly representative institutions, & efficient & sympathetic administration; the objectives included the extension of social welfare, expansion of education & health services, improvement of agriculture.

forestry - & so on. This is what we all signed up to. At interview I was not asked the famous ~~one~~ question "How would you react to serving under an African superior?" Presumably it was reserved for those destined for West Africa, where independence was expected to occur earlier than in E. & Central Africa. At the time it seemed a long time ahead, & had I been asked the question I would have been puzzled ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> its current relevance - but the prospect would not have been a problem. The grand design was one which I took seriously, & which I thought was right. There seemed to be an

opportunity to "make a difference" in a practical way, in the field - as compared with, for e.g. sounding off in The New Statesman & Fabian Bureau whilst enjoying the comforts of Hampstead.

In this context I did not have then & do not have now, any political allegiances, & have always voted for the party which I judged best for the country at the time - & is here in my time voted for the 3 main parties. Most lefties would assume me to be right wing; in reality my sympathies are - > were - with the left, but not the bleeding heart & strident variety; & I have no time for left-wing extremism. I am a lapsed Christian (C of E naturally!) & was brought up in the Christian tradition; lacking faith, I nevertheless subscribe to the Christian ethic - including the Protestant work ethic.

Reasons for wishing to join the CS are recorded on ~~pp.~~ pp. 1-3 of "The Affair with Africa".

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One topic missing from the Devonshire Course was any sort of assessment of the political situation in Tanganyika in 1951-2. This may seem a strange omission, but is perhaps not surprising. In retrospect it was a failing of the service that our interests lay primarily - almost exclusively - with the rural population; there was only one city of any size, Dar es Salaam, with a population then of only 100,000, whilst ca. about 8 million were scattered over the countryside in small townships. It is urban populations which generate politics. At the time the nearest thing to a local political party was the Tang. African Association, whose agenda was primarily social/educational, but with a potential to morph into a political party - which it did as the Tang. African Union (TAAU) under the leadership of Julius Nyerere - but not until 1954. Until then there was no politics, not overtly at any rate. I suspect that its emergence came as a surprise to the Govts. I recollect holding a village meeting in either '53 or '54, & in response to a question I replied that "we" were not here indefinitely & would be leaving Tanganyikans to run the country in due course - a statement which elicited expressions - genuine I thought - of dismay. How quickly things changed!

Here a description of my own attitudes might be apt, although to a great extent these are implicit in some of the foregoing. Having had a fairly protected childhood & youth, 2 years in the army acquainted me with a wider - a generally rougher - cross-section of society. And I learned to rub along with young

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men who I would otherwise probably never have even met on equal terms. Again, Oxford was probably not as self-regarding as it has become latterly; most fellow-undergraduates were ex-grammar school youngsters who had experienced the levelling effect of military service; and with wartime stringencies continuing into the 1950s, privileges were rare. A university education was the privilege.

I did not view Africa & Africans with any sense of innate superiority on a personal level. Of course one was aware of being part of a collective structure which existed to move the country & its people forwards; and if this sounds patronising it might perhaps be roughly equated with the attitude of a conscientious teacher vis a vis his pupils/students. To the best of my recollection I always addressed Africans - staff & public - courteously and using appropriate general or local honorifics. Not only whites were "Suwana"! Criticism was sometimes necessary, but this does not imply rudeness. (A recent TV series - April 2011 - demonstrated the appalling labour relations in UK in the 1950s; & a very stuffy & remote officialdom. It struck me vis a vis that our staff & public relations in Tanganyika were very much better, more friendly & informal!)

Back to politics. In terms of realpolitik I was certainly naive in assuming that since we both had the same objectives, there should (could?) have been more co-operation between Govt. and TANU, and a good deal less friction; but I reckoned without the political imperative of the TANU

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leadership to appear to have the initiative & to be several steps ahead of Govt., & to demand independence earlier than level-headedness would indicate. Conversely Govt. was too conservative & unimaginative, albeit for the best of reasons, (see App. B of "An Affair with Africa" for observations on progress towards independence.) Objectively Tanganyika would have benefited from a longer period of colonial tutelage & longer experience of internal self-govt. prior to independence. So that whilst I - and probably most of us - acknowledged the legitimacy of TANU's aims (which were identical to our own), I/we could & did get v. angry at some of their interventions, racist propaganda, and about the time necessarily - & sometimes unnecessarily - devoted to security matters when there were more important & constructive things to get on with. Similarly one could get v. cross at one's own Govt. from time to time. On the other hand, annoying & irritating as these episodes were, one could generally get on with one's mandatory & self-imposed tasks with relatively little intrusion of national politics. Public meetings could be quite robust, as sometimes were debates in the District Council chamber - where both "they" & I could get quite heated in proposing & defending our views; but this never in my experience descended into unpleasantness/rancour/abuse. I have referred to my own conduct towards Africans; the other side of the coin is that I found Tanganyikans in general to have a natural courtesy and good humour, more prone to laughter than anger. In this context I can recollect only 3 instances of rudeness/incivility directed at me - & on each occasion the offenders were shouted down by their fellows.

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Here I pause to confess to 2 particular prejudices which I held when I first went to Africa, deriving from an assumption that we all have our appointed place on the earth's surface. In this context I disapproved of European settlement in the tropics - reinforced by - in retrospect - a probably misplaced concern re health. In similar vein I thought that the Asian community played too dominant a role vis a vis Africans. Africa was for Africans - & of course Europe for Europeans, India for Indians etc. Experience diluted these early biases, though not quite to the point of extinction.

### African nationalism.

I've touched on local politics, but not specifically in relation to nationalism. What is typically overlooked in reference to African nationalism is that a colony / protectorate / trust territory was not - yet - a nation. It was a state, had boundaries (often inappropriate, but where have boundaries not been?), & a countrywide system of govt. & administration. But generally there was no sense of nationhood. A person was defined by his/her extended family, clan, and tribe - & to a variable extent locality. He would recognize the reality of his village or chiefdom council for example, but even "the district" could be a remote concept - and the nation even more so. Nationhood requires a nation. This was the situation when I arrived in 1952.

Government I think never faced up to the quandary posed by a conflict not so much of interests as of philosophies. On one hand, with the long-term objective of the nation state it would have been desirable to



inculcate a sense of nationhood; on the other it was an  
 article of faith to recognise local ethnic / societal / linguistic  
 differences, & the whole structure of local government  
 was based on recognition of these differences; it was a  
 structure which was susceptible of modernisation, &  
 this was taking place, but too slowly. A sense of  
 nationhood would have developed, but slowly;  
 TANU set about creating it, making our recognition  
 of difference obsolete. In this they were assisted by  
 the fact that although there were tribal loyalties  
 amongst the 120 tribes, there was very little (if any)  
 tribalism of the destructive kind seen elsewhere - as in  
 Kenya, Nigeria etc. Also TANU was the only national  
 party, so there was no conflation of "nationalist" &  
 tribal / party interests as elsewhere.

However, at this stage although "nationalism" is a  
 convenient buzzword, & easily understood, it did not  
 yet exist. We did not have nationalism, we had  
 anti-colonialism, the promotion of resentment at  
 being governed by foreigners rather than resentment  
 of what those foreigners were actually doing.  
 There was a marked degree of socialism & personal  
 ambition masquerading as "nationalism".

[ In passing, our recognition of local differences  
 has often been perceived as a policy of "divide  
 & rule". This was perhaps the case during the period  
 of colonial expansion pre-1918, but was  
 certainly not the case in my time. In seeking to  
 create a  $\$$  viable nation state, what advantage  
 could accrue from internal divisions? What  
 we wanted was cohesion. ]

I've touched on reasons for feeling intermittent resentment of political activism - the fact that it was often malicious, & was a distraction. Who would want to be monitoring political meetings, decoding security telegrams, countering mischievous propaganda & so on when he could be working on plans for a new school or the feasibility of introducing an ambulance or ante-natal service? Here I revert to a point ~~was~~ referred to earlier - the generation of hostility between TANU & Govt. when we had the same aims. One must assume that any African politician with any standing was aware that independence was the intended outcome of colonial policy, & had been since the early 1920s; & that any public utterances to the contrary were downright untruths. The "struggle for independence" was a myth, a pantomime; African leaders knew they were pushing at an open door, that they would not be propped up & shot or flung into jail without due legal process. No doubt there were internal party dynamics which required a bit of theatre, but they did not require to pretend that "freedom" ~~independence~~ was to be permanently denied.

There was another concern. It was not as far as I know Govt. policy, but we did feel protective towards our unsophisticated and politically unaware peasantry. We wanted them to be more aware than they were about politics in general, and what independence would mean; & we had some fears that post-independence they might be taken advantage of by the upspringing political class - useful voting fodder, but their needs & rights otherwise ignored. Not unreasonable fears in the light of post-colonial history.

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In this respect Tanganyika was fortunate in the leadership of Julius Nyerere, a man of rare principle amongst African politicians of the day. He also had a number of able & principled lieutenants & future ministers, but also a handful of less savory characters who could have been a threat to Nyerere's leadership & Tanganyika's future had Nyerere, the Governor (Turnbull) & HM G not reached an accommodation re accelerated independence.

Reverting to specifically local politics, TANU officials at provincial & district level were often re-education, & many had no previous work experience of any kind. The Provincial Secretary in K. Lake Province was one such, and it was these lower echelon figures who tended to get under our skin & provoke occasional anger & annoyance.

In my own last district I think I was particularly lucky; the local Chairman & Secretary of TANU were both amiable & relatively harmless; they & the membership no doubt promoted opposition, but - if they tried - failed to provoke hostility. I appointed these 2 officers to the District Council, had them to my home with other locals, & had an occasional beer with them in the town.

As remarked earlier TANU, & in particular Julius Nyerere, made much of nation-building & its corollary national unity. It was probably in pursuit of this policy that a one-party state was initiated not long after independence; opposition politics was divisive, so henceforth the party would be the government - both central & local, whilst the party itself would be informed by grass-roots opinion - well, to some extent!

Concurrently with this the old tribal structures of local government which we had been slowly modernising over the years were dismantled; a further reason for doing this, I surmise, was to do away with possible alternative & disruptive foci of loyalty. "Umoja" or "Oneness" was the order of the day - and not altogether a bad one.

D. Boston  
May 2011

Note. In my book there is a sub-chapter on politics & security (pp. 190-198). There is nothing there which I wd. wish to retract, but I regret not having mentioned the fact that in the few months of ~~some~~ intermittent anxiety in 1959, these concerns were not generated by events within my own district; they derived from intelligence reports emanating ~~from~~ fortnightly (approx) from Special Branch in Dar. I don't suggest that these comprised a "dodgy dossier," but presumably it was their duty to present worst-case scenarios. I have discussed this matter with several former DCs, & all agreed with the view just expressed.