'…a proper subject of reproach to the Empire'. Reflections on British Education Policy in the Seychelles 1938-1948[1]

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Abstract

The Seychelles, one of Britain's more remote Indian Ocean colonies, long suffered a totally inadequate system of schooling based mainly on the Roman Catholic mission. This article traces how education policy was challenged in the 1930s and changed in the 1940s. Emphasis is placed on the decisive role of the colonial governor in initiating and implementing a change in policy and the absence of any sense of overriding direction and control emanating from Whitehall.

In a recently published paper I argued that contrary to popular belief inspired by a variety of armchair critics of British imperialism like Martin Carnoy *et al*, there never was a British colonial education policy in any sense of a prescribed course of action adopted and deliberately implemented throughout the colonies, with the primary aim of maintaining British supremacy.[2] The colonial empire was far too diverse and far-flung for that. Moreover, as Lord Hailey commented, British colonial administrators were traditionally pragmatists at heart and the Colonial Office treated each colony as a unique separate entity responsible for its own destiny.[3] This approach was endorsed in February 1940 in the *Statement of Policy on Colonial Development and Welfare*:

> From London there will be assistance and guidance, but no spirit of dictation. The new policy of development will involve no derogation from the rights and privileges of local legislatures …. The whole effort will be one of collaboration between the authorities in the colonies and those at home; there must be ready recognition that conditions vary greatly from Colony to Colony, and that Colonial Governments, who best know the needs of their own territories, should enjoy a wide latitude in the initiation

> and execution of policies, the primary purpose of which is to promote the prosperity and happiness of the peoples of the Colonial Empire. [4]

There were several basic guiding principles that shaped education in Britain's colonies, for example, the free reign given to voluntary or non-government schools and the right of parents to choose the education of their choice for their children, but specific policy was invariably left to local colonial administrators to determine often at the specific direction of the governor. To verify this thesis I suggested that more detailed case studies of individual colonies were needed in order to transfer the study of British colonial education from the speculative field of the historicist to the proper study of the educational historian. This paper on the shaping of education policy in the Seychelles was written with that aim in view.

The Seychelles, a varied collection of some 115 tropical islands of which about 33 are inhabited, constituted one of the more remote of Britain's colonial outposts. Deryck Scarr referred to them as 'part of the West Indies lost in the Indian Ocean'.[5] Situated some 1000 miles due east of Kenya and northeast of Madagascar, they were first sighted by the Portuguese admiral Vasco da Gama in 1502 but they remained largely uninhabited except for pirates until the French annexed them in 1756. Named after Louis XV's Minister of Finance, Jean Moreau de Seychelles, they became a British possession after the surrender of Mauritius in 1812. British suzerainty was ratified in 1814 at the Treaty of Paris. For the rest of the nineteenth century the Seychelles were administered as part of the colony of Mauritius. In 1903 they became a separate crown colony. Initially the British were keen to acquire the islands to prevent French privateers preying on British shipping off the coast of India but that threat soon retreated and for most of the nineteenth century the colony was largely forgotten and neglected.

There was no indigenous population but the French settled in the islands establishing a livelihood principally from copra using imported slaves from Africa. The British used the islands as a dumping ground for liberated African slaves and also allowed Indians and Chinese to settle there. During the nineteenth century and beyond there was much intermarriage which resulted in the predominantly Creole population of the present day. In 1938 there was an estimated population of about 29,500, of whom about 28,000 were of African descent. Most people lived on one of three main islands with the vast majority located on Mahe, a mere 54 square miles in area, which included Victoria, the only

township of any size. The whole colony comprised some 156 square miles but it was spread across many miles of ocean.

Despite many decades of British rule French influence in the colony was still strong in the 1930s. The British never settled in large numbers and the old French families still retained their influence as the principal landowners. Roman Catholicism was the predominant religion - there was a minor Anglican presence – and the French language was still widely used although a form of Creole, based on French, was the most widely spoken language. English was almost solely the language of officialdom. Overall, the colony had long been largely ignored in Whitehall because of its remoteness and lack of any strategic significance.

This state of affairs might have long continued had it not been for the growing chorus of concern increasingly voiced in Britain in the 1930s at the nation's apparent neglect of its colonies.[6] This criticism was directed mainly at the appalling poverty and apparent neglect of many West Indian colonies – the so-called slums of empire – but much of the criticism applied equally to a colony like the Seychelles. The growing chorus of dissatisfaction generated by various left wing academics led eventually to the appointment of the West Indies Royal Commission in June 1938. The stirring of the Colonial Office conscience was largely due to Malcolm MacDonald, the Colonial Secretary, who had become increasingly convinced of the need to promote social and economic progress in the colonies after the prolonged economic depression of the early 1930s.[7]

What little education there was in the Seychelles had traditionally been provided principally by the Roman Catholic Church, together with some minor Anglican input, but it was mostly at the primary level and of very poor quality. Many children never went to school and illiteracy was widespread. The colonial administration had opened a government primary school in Victoria in 1891 but it was handed over to the missions in 1924. Likewise, in 1910, the government opened a boys' secondary school in Victoria (King's College) staffed with English teachers but it closed in 1920 for lack of public support, or as some might say, because the Roman Catholic mission 'killed it'. Thereafter all schooling was run by the missions. The government provided financial assistance to the missions in the form of grants-in-aid but they were meager in the extreme and not based on any fixed principle. As a consequence the missions bore the main cost of schooling. The government's 'Department of Education' so-called, consisted of an

inspector of schools and his clerk. The inspector's main tasks were to inspect schools to determine whether they deserved financial assistance and to set public examinations.

This totally unsatisfactory state of affairs was highlighted in a report compiled by the Financial Commissioner in 1933, in the depths of the Great Depression, when the Seychelles administration was in dire financial trouble. As fate would have it, the report coincided with the arrival of a new governor, Gordon (later Sir Gordon) Lethem, who immediately expressed grave concern at the state of education in his new domain.

Lethem, a Scot by birth and upbringing, was educated at the Mill Hill secondary school in Edinburgh and the universities of Edinburgh and Grenoble before being called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. In 1911 he joined the Colonial Service and served in various administrative positions in Nigeria before his appointment to the Seychelles. Later he served in the Leeward Islands (1936-41) and British Guiana (1941-46). When Lethem arrived in the Seychelles, such was the gravity of the financial position that it had been recommended that the inspector of schools, the only government education official in the colony, be compulsorily retired because he was over 55 years of age. Lethem endorsed the recommendation with great reluctance but thereafter sought actively to initiate moves to improve both the scope and quality of schooling. Little was achieved in the immediate future – the wheels of colonial administration in Whitehall in the 1930s rarely exceeded second gear at best – but Lethem was successful in arousing genuine concern in London which eventually paved the way for a major reappraisal of British education policy in the Seychelles in the late 1930s and thereafter.

To some degree Lethem was fortunate in that the time was ripe for educational reform in the Seychelles. Many of the French settler families as well as the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches recognized the need for reform and Lethem received many representations from interested parties deploring the poor quality of education and urging reform. Many Europeans, in particular, argued strongly for the reestablishment of a government secondary school for boys. A major stimulus to educational reform, especially within the Catholic schools, also came from an unexpected source. In 1933 Dr Hinsley, then Apostolic Delegate, and later Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, visited the Seychelles and severely criticized the scope and quality of schooling. As the foremost Vatican official in the United

Kingdom his comments could not be ignored by either the Catholic Church in the Seychelles or the governor for that matter.[8] The Roman Catholic Church responded by engaging Father Gerard, a priest in Tanganyika, to prepare a report on its schools. He was very critical of many aspects of the Catholic school system but remained convinced that in any reform programme the Church should continue to control its schools.[9] Again, perhaps in direct response to Hinsley's visit, Lethem engaged in a busy and time-consuming schedule of meetings with interested parties before compiling a lengthy despatch, amounting to no less than sixteen typed pages, to the Colonial Office in October 1935, in which he concluded that education in the Seychelles was 'a proper subject of reproach in the Empire'.[10]

By 1935 the colony's finances were improving and Lethem's immediate concern was to appoint a new head of the Education Department with widened powers of inspection, especially of secondary education, and an inspector of teacher training. He also mentioned a variety of ideas to reform education including increasing government financial assistance, the creation of a training school for primary teachers, inspection and control of the school curriculum which was previously non-existent, and promotion of the teaching of English using English born teachers. He regretted the time it had taken to get to grips with educational reform but said it was due to 'financial uncertainties' and the problem of deciding in principle between establishing government secular schools or giving more financial aid to the missions. In 1923, the then Governor, Sir Joseph Byrne, had given education wholly over to the missions. This, Lethem claimed, had seemed a wholly sensible and reasonable policy at the time but thereafter the government had neglected education and 'things had drifted'.

Reform of the Catholic schools had also generated its own problems. While there was a generally accepted need for reform there was no love lost between the ageing Marist Brothers who ran St Louis College, the only boys' secondary school, and the local Bishop. If, as had been suggested, the Bishop sought to place all schools under his control, the Brothers threatened to leave the colony. Furthermore, Father Gerard's report had contained many valid criticisms of the primary schools but they were bitterly resented by the nuns who taught in them .The Mother Superior of St Joseph's, which educated girls to secondary level, also thought that any takeover by the Bishop was 'definitely undesirable'. In a private letter to Cowell, a Colonial Office official, written at the same time as Lethem sent his dispatch to the Colonial

Office, he claimed that the Roman Catholic Church was also very worried of late by attacks in the local French newspaper - *Le Reveil Seychellois* - of the poor quality of its schools.[11] In the same letter Lethem admitted that the Colonial Office might have preferred an expert, rather than himself, to report on education in the colony but that could only have entailed long delays and 'our means permit nothing except reliance on the missions and the attempt to do what we can by inspection and gradually improving guidance and control'. However, he claimed that there was a seemingly widespread belief that government control of schooling should be more proactive and effective, and that a professionally qualified Englishman 'free from theological bias' should be put in charge of education. The latter he deemed essential to carry the reforms forward as the governor could not be expected to attend to all the details. In the light of the thesis advanced at the start of this paper it is abundantly clear that the initial desire to reform education in the Seychelles lay with the governor and not as a result of any initiative from Whitehall.

Soon after Lethem had sent his dispatch he left the Seychelles and was replaced as governor by Arthur (later Sir Arthur) Grimble. Meanwhile the Colonial Office cast about for a possible director of education but the salary that the Seychelles claimed it could afford – a meager £600 p.a.- was thought unlikely to attract a flood of applicants. In December 1937, after months of searching, C.B.Smith, the former Deputy Director of Education in Nigeria was eventually appointed as Director of Education in the Seychelles. At the time of his appointment he had been retired for five years! The post, traditionally a minor one in the colonial hierarchy, had been abolished in 1923 but re-established in 1936. It is a reflection of the difficulties of recruiting staff in many of the more remote colonies that it took two years to fill the post. It is ironic to note that Smith was one of the first to be considered for the post back in January 1936 but then other names were suggested. Eventually, in September 1937 he was again considered and appointed mainly it would seem because he was a Roman Catholic.

While the search for a new director ran its course the Colonial Office concerned itself with the pros and cons of trying to get an English Roman Catholic bishop to replace Bishop Joyce who resigned in 1936. At the same time there was growing Catholic opposition in the Seychelles to government sponsored education reforms. In a dispatch to the Colonial Office in July 1936, Grimble advised that the Bishop now proposed to take over control of St Louis College from the Marist

Brothers who were dependent on the Bishop for the land and buildings of the college that they had run for fifty years. They, in turn, proposed to leave the Seychelles.[12] The Colonial Office thought it was imperative to get the split in the Catholic ranks resolved before any educational progress could be achieved. In a further dispatch in August, Grimble said that the Swiss-based Catholic mission, which was uppermost in the Seychelles, was 'non-British in its ideals and thus at least a passive obstacle to the educational development of the Seychelles as a unit of the Empire'. This fact generated a serious problem, for education since the government could not possibly take over the whole financial burden or even a major part of it for many years to come. Hence it was necessary to remain prepared to bargain with the Catholics. To open a new government secondary school as had been proposed would probably be considered an unfriendly gesture and compromise good relations at the primary level. A new school would also be unable to compete for pupils with St Louis. Grimble thought that the only solution was to Anglisize the Swiss Mission's general outlook by the appointment of an English bishop.[13]

Smith's initial task as the new Director of education was to compile a report as a prelude to a major overhaul of the colony's education system. Smith arrived in the Seychelles in March 1938 and completed his report by the end of the year but any further action was delayed by the outbreak of war in 1939, and it was 1944 before educational reform was back on the Seychelles agenda. By then Smith had left the colony (1942) and it was his successor W.W.E.Giles, formerly an education officer in Tanganyika, who had the task of drawing up a ten year plan for future educational development based on Smith's report.[14]

Smith's findings were ample testimony to past neglect.[15] He estimated there to be between 6 and 7,000 children of school age of whom about half attended school. Government expenditure on education, mainly in the form of grant-aid to mission schools, had been unchanged at about £2,700 annually for the past twenty years. He estimated total annual colonial revenue at between £55 and 60,000. About 80 per cent of pupils attended the 22 Roman Catholic primary schools. The Anglicans ran a further 6 schools. There were two secondary schools, both Roman Catholic; St Louis College, for boys, and St Joseph's, for girls. The colony had between 80 and 90 primary teachers, 30 of whom were Roman Catholic sisters. The rest were local, untrained women. St Louis secondary school was run by the Marist Brothers by then under the direct control of the local Catholic Bishop

Monseigneur Maradan. St Joseph's was run by Irish nuns of the Order of St Joseph de Cluny.

Smith described the quality of primary schooling, especially in the Anglican schools, where there had been a short-sighted policy, obstinacy and an inability to organize and direct on the part of the Archdeacon, as deplorable but most parents didn't care because they themselves were illiterate. Both young and old nuns lacked training, school attendance was poor, the schools lacked adequate equipment, most school buildings were in need of urgent maintenance, and there was much rote learning of outdated subject matter. The ever-present threat of excommunication held over mothers of pupils who failed to attend Catholic schools was another widespread aspect of schooling noted by Smith. Secondary education was widely criticized in the colony because of its academic or bookish nature and the prevalence of 'cram' learning for local Cambridge examinations. There was also a lack of suitable white collar employment for secondary school leavers. The absence of any form of government schooling and the lack of interest in the schools on the part of successive British administrations clearly shocked Smith. Schooling was supposedly administered under an Education Ordinance introduced in 1910 but it was long outdated and Smith recommended a new act as a matter of urgency.

By the late 1930s education in the Seychelles, as in most other colonies, had reached an important crossroad. The growing demand for more and better quality education throughout the colonial empire had challenged the traditional mission monopoly of schooling. It was clear that henceforth the state would need to play an increasingly important role in the provision of schools and by implication demand more control over all schools and what was taught in them. The Roman Catholic mission in the Seychelles was Swiss (Capucui) in origin, small in numbers, and foreign in outlook. Many of its members were also unable to speak English. The newly appointed 'English' Roman Catholic Bishop also posed a problem. Whether or not Hinsley had any part in his appointment is unclear. Formerly known as Father Olivier, he completed a Post Graduate Certificate of Education at the London Institute of Education in the 1937/38 academic year and soon after was designated as Bishop of the Seychelles. He was described as 'a very proud and pompous young man of 43' who liked to be styled 'H.E.' in the local press and pulpit.[16] He kept a very close eye on his Catholic flock and their schools and it was considered highly unlikely that he

would readily agree to any major changes that might reduce Roman Catholic influence in education.

Smith's recommendations were predictable. He saw an urgent need for a new education ordinance to give the colonial government greater control over the establishment, financing and maintenance of schools, and also the power to enforce regular school attendance. Moves to improve the quality of education were also of vital importance. The provision for a teachers' training college was one of his main recommendations although he foresaw problems if the Roman Catholics chose not to co-operate. An improvement in teachers' salaries and conditions of employment were also considered essential. He also advocated a greater emphasis on the teaching of English in primary schools (after all, he claimed, the Seychelles was, and had been, a British colony for more than 100 years) and *the adoption of English* as the main medium of instruction in the secondary schools. He readily acknowledged that he language issue in schools was likely to provoke opposition from the long established French Catholic families and the Roman Catholic Church, both of which supported the use of French rather than English as the medium of instruction in the two Catholic secondary schools. Smith also hoped that the Roman Catholic Church might be persuaded to replace many existing religious with priests and nuns of English origin. Overall, he was greatly influenced by the poverty, apathy and indifference to educational reform shown by the majority of the population. There would need to be major parallel social and economic change, he argued, if educational reforms were to be successful.

In April 1940, due to wartime staff shortages, Smith became Colonial Secretary as well as Director Education and held both positions until his departure from the colony in 1944. Giles, who replaced him as Director of Education, was seconded from Tanganyika as a result of a financial grant made possible under the Colonial Development and Welfare [CD&W] Act of 1940. This act marked a decisive turning point in British colonial policy. As a consequence of the growing criticism of Britain's alleged neglect of the colonies, the traditional policy of self-sufficiency was abandoned in recognition of the fact that most colonies needed financial aid to promote both social and economic development. Cynics might claim that the change of heart was largely forced on Britain by the exigencies of war, but regardless of British motives, the

1940 act and a subsequent act passed in 1945, were to provide decisive long term benefits for most colonies including the Seychelles.

Little had changed since 1938 when Giles took up his post. His department still consisted of a table and chair, a probationer clerk, and an array of musty files in the basement of the Secretariat. The existing education ordinance gave the director no effective power to shape future policy; almost every school building was grossly overcrowded, poorly equipped, and needed replacing; syllabuses were antiquated; teaching was out of touch with local needs and realities, there being little or no provision for physical education or the teaching of handicrafts and domestic science; there was no training of teachers, no registration of schools or teachers, no teachers' examinations; teaching salaries were very low and there was no incremental salary scale for teachers; there were no visual aids or library facilities for pupils or teachers, and no full inspection of the colony's two secondary schools had ever taken place.

In late 1939 the Colonial Office appointed Christopher (later Sir Christopher) Cox as its first full-time Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In the latter half of 1943 Cox undertook an extensive familiarisation tour of British colonies in West and East Afric,a including a brief stopover in the Seychelles. Comments passed to Cox by Colonial Office officials before his departure highlight the paucity of first-hand knowledge about the colony in Whitehall. G.E.L.Gent asked him to concentrate on bringing home impressions of both government and non-government officials – 'One suffers so much from having no personal impression of the place oneself, nor anyone else here'.[17]In the same letter Gent alluded to the fact that 95 per cent of the population in the Seychelles was Roman Catholic. He asked Cox to ascertain whether it was 'a priest-ridden community of a low level on the worst Irish or South Italian model, or [was] there the basis of independence of thought amongst either the Seychellois or the coloureds'. Finally, Gent claimed that Sir George Gater, the Permanent Secretary at the Colonial Office, wanted the colony 'turned inside out' but Gent warned that 'easy as it might be to turn it inside out, it seems to me a useless and destructive activity unless we know what exactly we are doing in the process and expect to find when the inside is discovered'. T.R.Rowell, one of Cox's team of assistant educational advisers, warned that whatever was done for education in the Seychelles would have to be 'started from scratch and the most important task will be that of getting the Roman Catholic mission to see reason about teacher training and other educational expansion. They are, of course,

very reluctant to allow Government to have any finger in the pie and with 95 per cent of the population Catholic, it's very difficult for Government to run counter to the Mission, even though it is clearly seen that teacher training (and technical education for that matter) should be the responsibility of Government and run in separate institutions with lay staff.'[18]

Giles' first task as the new Director Education was to produce a preliminary report based largely on Smith's earlier findings, and to draw up an application for a £15,000 CD&W grant to provide for qualified staff and equipment from the United Kingdom to support a technical training centre, a domestic science centre, clerical and continuation classes, an interim scheme for teacher training, the purchase of a cinema and film strip projectors, a small library of films and film strips and a restricted vocabulary English course for all pupils in primary schools. The grant was approved early in 1945. Meanwhile Giles began work on the production of a ten-year plan of educational development which would serve as the basis for further CD&W grants. He was helped in this regard by a visit from W.E.F [Frank]Ward, the Director of Education in the neighbouring colony of Mauritius.[19]

Ward was one of the foundation staff members of Achimota College, Britain's educational showpiece in the Gold Coast. After spending fifteen years there during which time he played a leading role in shaping indigenous curricula, especially in history and music, he was asked to go to Mauritius in 1941 as the colony's first Director of Education. There he was confronted by a scenario very similar to that experienced by Smith in the Seychelles, including a mission [principally Roman Catholic] dominated education system. A further problem in Mauritius related to a significant but highly cynical Indian population which ran its own network of racially based schools. Ward was so successful in his efforts to establish an understanding with the missions, including the local Roman Catholic bishop, and the Indians, that the Colonial Office marked him out for higher things. Accordingly, in 1945 he was asked to return to London as Deputy Education Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a post that he retained until his retirement in 1956. In August 1944, Ward was asked to visit the Seychelles to advise Giles on the preparation of a ten-year plan. In private correspondence with Christopher Cox, the Educational Adviser to the Colonial Office, Ward claimed that his stay in the Seychelles had been much longer than he had anticipated, mainly because of the governor's request [insistence] that he help Giles to prepare a new education ordinance based on his

prior experience of a similar task in Mauritius.[20] The governor in question was Sir Marston Logan [1942-47]. The son of an Anglican clergyman, he was Oxford educated and joined the Colonial Service in Kenya in 1913. Before going to the Seychelles he was the Colonial Secretary in Northern Rhodesia [1937-42]. In the recently published article referred to at the start of this paper I argued that a governor's interest and support for education, or lack of it, was probably the single most important factor in shaping education policy in any colony. This was certainly the case in the Seychelles under Logan's leadership, and Ward's prolonged stay was evidence of this.

Ward's private correspondence with Cox, much of which is preserved in the Sir Christopher Cox papers in the UK National Archives at Kew, provides a valuable insight into the situation in the Seychelles and also illustrates how Cox was able to keep abreast of what was going on in various colonies through essentially informal channels at a time prior to the advent of rapid air travel and frequent field visits. Ward claimed that the Roman Catholic bishop was the crucial factor in reaching any agreement about the future of education, but he warned Cox that the bishop 'was an autocrat, ruthless, determined to retain complete control of education, and very clever'.[21] Ward suggested that it was 'useless to negotiate with him', although he still managed to get on well with him socially. The bishop told Ward told that Giles 'had trodden on his toes in various ways' but Ward suggested to Cox that the bishop had tried unsuccessfully to drive a wedge between him and Giles. After hours of negotiation the bishop eventually 'caved in'. Ward thought that he was a bully who needed standing up to, but he also suggested that the Swiss priests might have been a stumbling block in his negotiations with the bishop. In a letter written to the Anglican Archdeacon of the Seychelles in July 1947, Cox referred to the difficulties experienced in working with a foreign religious order: 'The [RC] Bishop is admittedly a very difficult personality; but behind that is the whole history of [the] particular [religious] Order in the Seychelles, and I am afraid I cannot see headway being made. Cox claimed that the priests were opposed to many of the educational changes introduced in 1946, especially the enhanced importance attached to the English language.[22]

Between them, Ward and Giles compiled a new education ordinance which became law in November 1944. Provision was to be made in all schools for religious instruction and worship and for moral training. For the first time all schools were brought under the control of the Director of Education and it was made clear to all parties that the government

was ultimately responsible for education policy and for the efficient running of all schools. A classified register of teachers was to be kept and only registered teachers were to be employed in any school. All appointments, transfers, promotions and dismissals of teachers in aided schools were to be subject to the approval of the government. Only teachers specifically employed to teach religion could subsequently be dismissed without government approval. All schools were to be registered and open to inspection by the Education Department and the Director was empowered to close inefficient schools after due notice. Finally, the governor was empowered to require all children enrolled in a school to attend until they reached a specified age or standard. When adequate accommodation was available in a given area the governor was also able to mandate compulsory attendance by all children of school age.

After protracted negotiations agreement was finally reached in June 1945 between the Roman Catholic bishop, the Anglican Archdeacon and the Director of Education on all proposals for future educational development.[23] In respect of primary education set times were provided for religious instruction; an English Father with educational qualifications was to be appointed as the Roman Catholic educational secretary; English was to be the principal medium of instruction; the government was to establish and maintain all new schools; if any new mission schools were approved they would receive 50 per cent government financial aid; stationery, textbooks etc were to be supplied free to all primary schools but to remain the property of the Education Department; the government was to pay 100 per cent of teachers' salaries, allowances and pensions; all teachers were to be appointed by the Director of Education on the recommendation of an interdenominational board comprising the Director of Education, the Roman Catholic Bishop and the Anglican Archdeacon; and, finally, secondary modern schools (based on the 1944 English tripartite system) catering for pupils aged 12 to 15 were to be established and maintained by the government.

At the secondary level it was agreed to construct a new building for St.Joseph's Convent school on mission land with a 50 per cent government subsidy. The school was still to be run by the Sisters of St.Joseph of Cluny but the Mother Superior was to be directly responsible to the Director of Education for the efficient running of the school. It was also agreed that a staff of British nuns with degrees and teacher training approved by the Education Department would be

recruited as soon as possible. Free access to the school was to be maintained regardless of race or religion, and if the building ceased to be used as a school the 50 per cent grant was to be refunded.

It was likewise agreed that new buildings and equipment for the boys' secondary school would be provided by the government but the school was henceforth to be governed by a body comprising the Director of Education, the Roman Catholic bishop, the Anglican archdeacon, and three others nominated by the governor. The school was to continue to be staffed by Marist Brothers but all were to be of British origin and qualified teachers. If the Marist Brothers were unable to maintain the school it was to revert to government control. The new buildings and the land on which they were built were to be government property. Finally, religious instruction was to be freely available to all religious faiths.

In August 1945, Giles submitted his ten year plan for 'Educational Reorganization in the Seychelles' to the governor who duly passed it on to London for approval.[24] The plan joined a queue of others generated by the CD&W Act all of which involved applications for generous financial aid if they were to ever get off the ground. The Seychelles plan was duly passed to the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, a body which had met continuously since January 1924, and was one of the most important of the various advisory committees set up by the Colonial Office between the two world wars.[25] The Plan ran into trouble almost immediately because it requested financial aid for both capital and recurrent expenditure. CD&W aid was intended mainly to finance large capital outlays and individual colonies were expected to generate sufficient revenue to maintain ongoing recurrent costs. The problem was first encountered in the West Indies where some of the very poor island territories sought recurrent aid. Special arrangements were made to accommodate the Virgin Islands and St.Helena but Treasury officials were loath to extend the practice. A teacher training college and a new boys' secondary school building were acceptable grounds for British aid but not the salaries of the European expatriate staff needed to run the teachers' college or the increased salary costs involved in improving the quality of classroom teachers. In July 1946 Giles met with the Advisory Committee while he was on leave.[26] He was told that his Ten Year Plan was far too costly and that it should be recast without recourse to an annual grant to cover recurrent costs. Giles subsequently drew up a revised plan which was approved after he met the Advisory Committee

again in November 1946, together with a promise of a CD&W grant of £100,000 for capital outlays.[27] Behind the scenes the progress achieved owed much to the leadership and wise counsel of the Governor.[28] Thereafter, the Roman Catholic bishop tried unsuccessfully to undermine the agreement reached in 1945 but he fell out with the Marist Brothers who left the Seychelles thereby forcing St.Louis College to close. They returned later but not before the Government was forced at short notice to take full responsibility for boys' secondary education.[29] Christopher Cox feared the worst as the Catholic Bishop reneged on the 1945 agreement but a new governor, Dr P.S.Selwyn-Clarke, managed to pour oil on troubled waters. By early 1949 the new Seychelles College (for boys) was completed and agreement had been reached for a new convent school which would share playing fields and an assembly hall with the College. In the light of the Catholic Bishop's prolonged and often determined opposition to the government's educational plans it was ironic in the extreme when the Governor, in addressing the Legislative Council, spoke of the 'most friendly negotiations' which had led to the new arrangements.[30]

Limitations of space prevent further coverage of educational developments in the Seychelles prior to the granting of independence in June 1976 - in general it was a story of steady growth in the quantity and quality of schooling provided - but sufficient has been said to suggest that there was no evidence whatsoever in the years covered in this paper of any British attempt to force a specific education policy on the Seychelles. It is true that after 1945 strenuous efforts were made throughout the colonies to expand secondary education and to improve the quality of primary education by, for example, building teachers' training colleges and recruiting qualified expatriate teaching staff, but that was a common theme in all the colonies based on urgent pragmatic needs that were obvious to all. Moreover, much of the energy that went into planning for postwar educational expansion was based largely on *ad hoc* observations, and colonial officials, without any prior experience, quite literally learned on the job how to plan for the future. If the British experience in shaping post-war education in the Seychelles is any guide, the actions of British officials hardly constitute in any pejorative sense the imposition of a 'colonial education policy' designed deliberately to maintain British hegemony as some critics of imperial rule would have one believe. Doubtless some post-modern revisionists will challenge this conclusion regardless of the evidence.

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9. A copy of Gerard's 40 page report (typed in French) is to be found in CO 530/365, National Archives, Kew
10. Lethem to S of S, 9 Oct. 1935. CO 530/365
11. Lethem to Cowell, 8 Oct. 1935. CO 530/365
12. Grimble to SofS, 7 July 1936. CO 530/394 (1936)
13. Grimble to SofS 25 Aug. 1936. CO 530/394
14. Much of the background information on education in this paper is derived from annual reports of the Seychelles Education Department, especially the historical summary in the 1948 Report.
15. A typed copy of Smith's Report on the Re-organization of Education in the Seychelles, 22 December 1938, is contained in CO 1045/611 of the Sir Christopher Cox Papers housed at the National Archives, Kew.
16. Unsigned Notes on education in the Seychelles, September 1943, CO 1045/611
17. Gent to Cox, 15 June 1943, CO 1045/611
18. Rowell to Cox 8 June 1943, CO 1045/605
19. For more information on Ward see Clive Whitehead, 'The admirable Ward': a portrait of W.E.F.(Frank) Ward, CMG, colonial educator, administrator, diplomat and scholar, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol.25, No. 2, 1993, pp.138-160
20. Ward to Cox, 30 Sep. 1944, CO 1045
21. *Ibid*
22. Cox to Archbishop D.Mathew, 17 July 1947, CO 1045/514

23. Giles' summary of points agreed upon by himself and the Roman Catholic Bishop, CO 1045/514
24. Gov. to Col. Sec. 21 Oct. 1944. Cited in Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies [ACEC] paper No 3 of 1944
25. For more detail on the advisory committee see Clive Whitehead, The Advisory Committee on Education in the [British] Colonies 1924-1961, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. XXVII, No.3, 1991, pp. 385-421
26. ACEC 9/45 in CO 1045/68, National Archives
27. ACEC 20/46 in CO 1045/69 National Archives
28. Comment in the *Seychelles Dept. of Education Annual Report 1948*, p.3
29. *Ibid*
30. Governor's Address to the Seychelles Legislative Council, 10 June 1949. CO 1045/514