



*by*  
**NANCY CUNARD**  
*and*  
**GEORGE PADMORE**

ENLARGED  
EDITION

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# THE WHITE MAN'S DUTY

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NANCY CUNARD

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GEORGE PADMORE

*(Photograph on cover by Barbara Ker-Seymer)*

— SECOND EDITION —

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## FOREWORD

### NOTE ON SECOND EDITION

SINCE the publication of the first edition of *WHITE MAN'S DUTY* two years ago, the Colonial Question has been more widely discussed in the British and American Press than at any other time. The future status of subject peoples has engaged the attention of the San Francisco Conference, where the principle of trusteeship in relation to the dependent territories was embodied in the Charter of the World Security Organization.

In the present edition, information contained in the previous edition has been brought up to date, and two chapters have been added dealing with recent constitutional changes in the West Indies and African colonies which are analysed and commented on by George Padmore, himself a native of Trinidad, where his father was a distinguished botanist and a Fellow of the Entomological Society of Great Britain.

Padmore was educated at St. Mary's College, Trinidad, and at Fisk and Howard Universities in the U.S.A. It was during his undergraduate days that he first became aware of the terrible economic, political and social status of the overwhelming majority of the Negroes, and even before completing his studies for the Bar, he started to take an active part in advocating reforms for the welfare and development of the Colonial peoples. Since then, he has been in the forefront of that ever increasing vanguard of middle-class Colonials, who are identifying their public life with the workers, peasants and other under-privileged sections of the coloured peoples.

An eloquent public speaker and prolific writer, George Padmore has travelled extensively throughout the Americas, the West Indies, Europe, Africa and Soviet Central Asia, studying and comparing conditions among Colonial communities and national minorities. His books, *Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers* and *How Britain Rules Africa*, were among the first studies on the Colonial system between the two world wars to arouse widespread interest on the deplorable economic and social conditions under which the vast majority of the dark-skinned peoples of the world live.

His forthcoming book, entitled *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire*, makes a comparative study of Soviet methods of solving Colonial and Racial minorities' problems with British and other Western imperialist administrations in Asia and Africa.

NANCY CUNARD.

*Paris, July 1945.*

## PREFACE

**A**UTUMN 1942—the third anniversary of the declaration of War has come and gone and at this time the thoughts of men and statesmen, particularly in Great Britain and the U.S.A., are focused not only on the struggle, and on victory over Nazi-Fascism, but on after-the-war reconstruction and a new policy of life for humanity—for the whole of humanity.

Never before in history has so much been said and insisted on for a total remaking of existence in the different countries of the earth. At the cost of this, the Second World War, what transformation of the social and economic world situation is being envisaged? Are the white peoples to be the sole beneficiaries?

British and United States leaders in clear terms tell us: "No. This is to be for *all* peoples, for *all* races."

Words pronounced by President Roosevelt contain a hope: "A planet unvexed by wars, untroubled by hunger or fear, and undivided by senseless distinctions of race, colour or theory."

Roosevelt has voiced the "Four Freedoms":

"Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion,  
Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear."

They are closely inter-related, inherent in Democracy, non-existent in Fascism, and an obvious necessity to all mankind. If these be won, and maintained, it is worth while being alive.

There are pledges, such as Cordell Hull's on July 24th, when he broadcast to the world that the American people are fighting that all peoples, without distinction of race, colour or religion, should be free, on condition that these peoples accept to fight to safeguard their liberty.

*There are also the findings of science to back up these sentiments on the material plane: the earth contains enough resources and man has attained knowledge sufficient to produce enough food and other matters of material welfare to bring every living being into a state of comfort, and even more, in one generation alone.*

For Great Britain this immense new vision of the future is bound up with the question of her Empire and the 500 million subjects in it.

Our politicians and prominent leaders in various fields, and of different political opinion, have made public statements:—

"We have already condemned and rejected the old inequalities between ourselves and the so-called subject races." (Sir Stafford Cripps.)

"We must make the Colonial peoples feel that it is their Empire as well as ours . . . we have got to make the Empire a people's Empire." (Captain Gammans, Conservative M.P. for Hornsey.)

"It is obvious that the pre-war epoch of British Imperialism in the East is over for good and all. . . . The sooner we make up our minds to the realisation that the destiny of the East is no longer a part of the White Man's Burden the sooner we shall discover the foundations of an enduring peace there." (Professor Laski.)

A great case can be made out of the multiplicity of words, speeches, articles, sentiments voiced in Press and Parliament, of this kind—a case for hope.

Yet many of us, white as well as coloured, are in doubt as to whether or no these sentiments and promises will materialise. We do not want to be cynical; but we remember. And to-day (this has to be said) the coloured soldier of the U.S.A. over here in very large numbers, records, that although he may be the same as a white American soldier in democracy when democracy is a battlefield, he is not to be the same in daily relations with the people of Great Britain, because some of his chiefs have requested that this be not so. What can he conclude, if he knows the pledges of Mr. Cordell Hull: "without distinction of race, of colour. . . . ?"

Many of us feel that sincerity of purpose motivated the promises and pledges as did perhaps in no less measure the realisation that such is the only policy which will maintain peace when it is won. Yet we know that between the promises and their realisation there is an immense No Man's Land.

What does it contain? Will the British "master" evolve terms that can be accepted by the coloured "subject"? Will grudging "reforms" be arrived at in some sort of "appeasement of native unrest"? Or will they be real, necessary, sterling 100 per cent. democracy?

With the enemy at the gates of India no solution has been reached, and we are told that one of the reasons is that Indians cannot agree among themselves. To this Nehru answers: "The people of England feel that this is their war and that they have a job to do. But this feeling is lacking in India." Is that the truth, or just the view of "an embittered man" as Nehru has sometimes been called by those who prefer anything to looking truth in the face?

Events moved very fast in the beginning and spring of 1942 in the Far East, and in the comments here which followed, British politicians and coloured leaders were of the same mind, for the facts were historically irrefutable.

In a debate on Colonial Policy in the House of Lords (May 21st), Lord Listowel asked if we had a policy which would rally the Colonial people in their own defence. In Burma, he said, local inhabitants had taken up arms against the British when the Japanese advanced; in Malaya there had been numerous fifth-columnists. Lord Wedgwood, in the same debate, said that natives of the Colonies should be given commissions in the army and become officials in the administration.

George Padmore, co-author with me of this pamphlet, pointed out in "The Crisis" (July, New York):—

"The Singapore natives, like those on the mainland, had no voice in their own affairs. Surely it is not really surprising that when the crisis came, the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, was unable to mobilise the common people—Malayan, Chinese, Indian—to withstand the Japanese onslaught. How could a people, whose existence has been entirely ignored, presumably because they were considered unfit to participate in the government of the country, suddenly resuscitate themselves, as it were, and assume responsibility in defence of the system which had until then failed to recognise their existence?"

What do Africa and its descendants feel about the all-in fight against Nazism and Fascism? Rudolph Dunbar, the Negro journalist and composer from British Guiana, puts it very clearly:—

"You will not gain the full confidence and co-operation of coloured men and women by telling them they would be worse off under Fascist rule. You will only do that by convincing them that they will be better off in free association with you."

The crux of it all is: In war—to defend what is one's own. In peace—equal rights.

\* \* \*

The logical feeling exists among coloured peoples: "Now Britain is in trouble she needs us, but when it is all over we shall be as before."

This could be removed—but to do so would call for a change of heart, and of policy, towards coloured peoples on the part of many of the authorities and officials *particularly in the Colonies*.

In the United States the 13 million Negroes see the call to the Colours translated for their race into a matter of segregated regiments and Army Service groups. One of their 400 newspapers, commenting on a proposal made here in London during the worst air-raids to create separate shelters for coloured people, wrote: "If this is all that Britain is fighting for, the *status quo*, then to ask American Negroes to fight and die for Britain is like asking them to fight and die for Mississippi" (land of lynchings).

True, civilians and soldiers of Great Britain are against treating the American coloured soldiers differently to the white, as they are requested to do. Yet is it possible to say that colour prejudice and colour bar here are on the decline?

We salute the forceful article by our Minister of Information, Mr. Bracken, "Colour Bar Must Go" (*Sunday Express*, September 20th, 1942), but we firmly believe that an Act of Parliament making all Colour Bar manifestations an offence (as was the case, for instance, in France before Hitler) would be an efficacious and sensible basis for its eradication. Race prejudice (of Jew, Negro or any people) belongs to Nazi-Fascism and not to Democracy.

If the British Government intends colour prejudice to end, as Mr. Bracken states it does, it will have gone a long way in initiating "the second freeing" of all coloured peoples in the world, over 100 years, as this would be, after our abolition of slavery itself. The gratitude of those of colour and of those who understand the effects of race prejudice will be acquired in fullest measure.

What is said in this article of Brendan Bracken is to-day's parallel and continuation of the speeches of the great Abolitionists during the 20-year struggle in Parliament at the end of the 18th century. Let me quote some passages:—

"The barriers still standing in the way of the social equality of coloured people must be withdrawn." "This is a process which will take time, but responsible people in Britain are determined that it shall be carried through, and the sooner the better." "I should like to emphasise that the theory of equal rights is not a mere high-sounding phrase." "I wish to emphasise here only that we in Britain do not intend to stand fast upon theories of political equality and economic freedom without seeing to it that the Negro peoples actually enjoy them in our country." "We in Britain are determined to see that the victory for which we are striving will be as much theirs as ours."

Colour Bar (*legally* non-existent in Great Britain, as says Mr. Bracken) all too often does exist in hotels, lodging-houses, restaurants, bars, public-houses and the minds of landlords. A new clause added to the legal regulations to which these places conform, punishing Colour Bar, as, say, disorderliness is punished, would be excellent.

This outspoken article deals mainly with Colour Bar in our own country. It is Lord Samuel who throws a revealing light on the Colonial situation. In a letter to *The Times* (August 8th, 1942), Lord Samuel says that several recent articles on the Colonial Empire "all stress the need for a forward Colonial policy," and quotes from one: "Until an end is put to public indifference there is no hope of a truly dynamic policy for the Empire. . . . The key is in the hands of the people at home." Lord Samuel then writes: "The fact is that, while Parliament and public are becoming more and more uneasy about the Crown Colonies, they are still hardly alive to their own responsibilities." Further he states that the House of Commons "devotes *one day a year* (emphasis mine) to the Colonial estimates. . . . There are useful discussions from time to time in the House of Lords. *But there is no normal agency, continuously at work* (emphasis mine), which will link the democratic forces of the nation with the processes of Colonial administration, which will diffuse the spirit of British policy throughout the Colonial Empire."

What are the "democratic forces of the nation"?

Coloured people translate this, and logically enough, into those who understand and who will back up our plea for "Equal Rights."

A year ago when I was in the British West Indies, black workers said to me constantly:—

"In England the Government and the people talk a great deal now about 'Democracy for all after the war.' Do they include *us* in this?" But back in England I was unable to find the slightest increase of interest, concern or knowledge of our coloured subjects' lamentable conditions, although there was,

and continues to be, an immense amount of talk and of writing and of hope about the future instauration of "the better life for all."

Democracy is not a difficult idea, or theory, or concept, or state of being to understand, and the colonised peoples have a very clear sense of what it means. *It is exactly what they are asking for:* equal opportunities as the white people in all fields of life.

Full equal rights are of course freedom, and freedom has been set down last of all in the words of Clause 3 of the Atlantic Charter: "The right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live."

To-day constant efforts are being made in India to end the terrible deadlock there, and the two facts contained in one phrase of Mr. P. N. Saprú's speech in the Council of State at New Delhi (September 22nd, 1942), are the heart-cry of the Indian millions: "The failure to include India in the scope of the Atlantic Charter; the totalitarian administration of India. . . ."

What is to be concluded from the sentiments and promises I have quoted here as examples of a very great many more of the same progressive kind? Are they to be casually dismissed: "Oh, this is just talk; nothing is meant to come of it!" (frequently the feeling of "the man in the street")—or are we to believe that they spring from a true determination to put an end to all the worst abuses and conditions of to-day? If Colonies are a national heartache to those who know them and who know also that coloured peoples are as human as ourselves and deserve the kind of life we ourselves desire, they could become, they *can* become, the *real* British "Commonwealth" which, to-day, is a term on paper, and not more, as far as the native population of the Colonies is concerned.

With all of this in mind I went to talk to George Padmore, the young leader of colour, who was born in Trinidad, British West Indies. Author of several books and innumerable articles on the Negro, Padmore has travelled much, absorbing political experience in many lands. Our premise was:—

"We will take the statesmen who have made these promises at their word."

And so in several talks we examined the situation in the Colonies, and I asked Padmore to give me his analysis and solution of the problem; it will be found in the following pages. My questions and Padmore's answers were taken down in shorthand and only very slightly edited for clarity and sequence later on.

Both Padmore and myself here render thanks to Miss Dorothy Pizer, who did the recording, for her valuable aid in this and for helpful and interesting criticism. And also to the American journalist, Morris Gilbert, for his encouraging information concerning the importance of the fight waged against race prejudice in U.S. labour and war industries by the Congress of Industrial Organisations, and for his interest and constructive comment throughout.

December, 1942.

A little time has passed since these lines were written and mention should be made here of an event which has taken its place since then in the history of colonial matters: the Constitutional Reform passed by the Netherlands Government in London.

The Dutch announced at the beginning of December that they would enact this reform immediately instead of only at the end of the war as had been their first intention. A few days later the Queen of the Netherlands ratified it. *Holland becomes a Federal State*, and this means that in the Federal Cabinet at The Hague will sit representatives from Holland's far-distant colonies as well as those elected by Dutch citizens in the home country. Along with this, and comprised in it, goes the establishing of *the same status*; which means that a Javanese, for instance, can become a Minister. That spells the end of any official stigma against colour

"Being determined to repudiate the last particle of 'Colonialism' (wrote the *Daily Telegraph* of December 3rd, 1942) the Dutch consider that there would be more risks in doing too little than in doing too much. They are anxious to conform with the Atlantic Charter." It is good that an Allied Government should go on record (and do so at this stage of the war) as interpreting the Atlantic Charter to mean, amongst other things, *racial equality in a constitutional form*. We salute the Dutch Government and the Queen of the Netherlands for this progressive, sensible and human measure.

At the time of the Royal Proclamation which ratified the new Freedom, the Queen said that the Atlantic Charter represented exactly the Dutch conception of liberty and justice, that Dutch unity had been fortified by sufferings in common and that nothing would be undertaken before all the component parts of the Dutch territories had freely expressed themselves. After the war, said the Queen, the Netherlands, along with the Dutch possessions could form four dominions indissolubly united as far as foreign questions were concerned, but that these four governments would be absolutely independent in what affected their interior or home administration. This division of the Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies, Dutch Guiana, and Curacao into communities of independent character would allow for full equality between races and peoples. Dutch Government policy will be based only on the merit of individual citizens and determined by the needs of the different sections of the population-groups.

"A partnership of peoples, each autonomous in internal affairs, linked to each other by an harmonious and voluntary co-operation," was the Queen's definition of the effect of this legislation in her broadcast of December 6th, 1942. Let us also record what the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies said on New Year's Eve of 1941: "To get rid of the last vestiges of Colonial society and convert the East Indies into a society with individuality and character of its own."

The Dutch Federation will affect many million human beings. Whereas the Dutch number some nine million in Holland itself, their colonial territories are as follows: Dutch East Indies, 72 million; Dutch Guiana and Curacao, 300,000. Though Curacao is only a little island off the coast of Venezuela it is the most important petrol refinery in the world. And it is also one of the very few places in the Caribbean where I have seen black labourers with shoes on their feet, living in perhaps humble but certainly decent conditions—a striking contrast to the scandalous poverty and rags of our own West Indian possessions.

NANCY CUNARD.

## CHAPTER I

### FREEDOM FOR ALL PEOPLES

NANCY CUNARD:—Very much has been said and written about the new form of life that must come after victory over Nazi-Fascism, not only for the white peoples of the world but for *all* races. "Poverty must end. There must be work and good living for everyone," is the slogan.

Now, Padmore, you are not only a specialist in Colonial matters, but a member and a leader of the national majority in the British West Indies, that is to say, of the people of colour, descendants of Africans. In your book, *Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, you have shown the miserable, the shocking, conditions in which exist most of the Negroes of the world. *How Britain Rules Africa*, another book of yours, is a thorough study of the situation in the Dark Continent. I have also read your prophetic book, *Africa and World Peace*, which warned us of the present war and its consequences. But to-day I am going to ask you a question about the future; a straightforward but also a very complex question: What should be done for the peoples of Africa, of the West Indies, of India, and all British Colonial possessions, by the new type, the progressive type of administration that the pledges given by our public leaders, if they be carried out, entitle us to expect after peace has been declared?

PADMORE:—Well, let us first consider the Atlantic Charter. That is a good basis on which to start.

N:—Excellent. The convoy in which I came back to England from the West Indies was the one which crossed Winston Churchill on his way to meet President Roosevelt. No one knew at the time what the meeting was about.

P:—You would suppose, from the way in which it is worded, that Clause 3 of the Charter would have application to all the peoples of the world. It says: "They (the representatives of Great Britain and of the United States) *respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they live, and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.*" This, apparently, was the meaning given to it not only by Colonial peoples, but even by prominent members of the British Government. Now let me tell you the facts:—

When Mr. Attlee made the announcement in August, 1941, about the Atlantic Charter, Colonial peoples throughout the world became very excited. At last, they thought, freedom was to come their way. And when a few days afterwards Mr. Attlee spoke at a meeting of the West African Students' Union in London, a member quite innocently asked whether it would in reality apply to the coloured peoples of the Empire. Mr. Churchill's deputy replied that there was not to be found "in the declarations which have been made on behalf of the Government in this country on the war any suggestion that the freedom and social security for which we are fighting should be denied to any of the races of mankind. We are fighting this war not just for ourselves, but for all peoples."

Now, this seemed specific enough; too specific apparently for Mr. Churchill. For almost immediately after his return from the Atlantic meeting with President Roosevelt, he pointed out to the House on September 9, 1941, that, "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 . . . so that it is quite a separate problem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and among the peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown."

So there it was. And all the Africans and Indians and Cingalese and Burmans and West Indians, and all the rest of the Colonial peoples whose hopes had been raised by the announcement of the Atlantic Charter and the explicitness of Mr. Attlee's statement, were dumbfounded. When they had recovered from the shock they became more bitter than ever. First came U-Saw from Burma

to test the British attitude. Point blank he asked for a promise of self-government for Burma after the war, and point blank it was refused. While U-Saw as an individual was not particularly important, he reflected the aspirations of the nationalists of Burma. There is no doubt, as we have been able to judge from subsequent events, that there was, as he said: "a small section of Burmese opinion which believes that to aid Britain win the war means to aid Britain to keep us in subjection. . . . There is another section which, while it cherishes no love for the Japanese, feels that if it is Burma's destiny to remain a subject nation, then it might prefer to be governed by a nation that is of the same blood and of the same religion."

Next, West African nationalists and intellectuals, watching these events very closely, addressed a cablegram to the Prime Minister through the leading Negro newspaper of Nigeria, *The West African Pilot*. It said: "Must we assume that the Deputy Premier's (Mr. Attlee) statement to the West African Students' Union, London, that the Atlantic Charter would benefit coloured races as well as the white race, is misleading and unauthorised? Are we fighting for the security of Europe to enjoy the Four Freedoms whilst West Africans continue to live under pre-war status? On behalf of the Protectorate and Colony of Nigeria, we request your clarification of the applicability of the Atlantic Charter regarding Nigeria. This will enable us to appreciate the correct bearings of 21 million Negroes in the sea of international politics."

This direct challenge from so-called "backward Africans" must have come as a shock and a surprise to the powers-that-be, and certainly was a most unlooked-for consequence of the simple question put by the West African student to Mr. Attlee in August, 1941. What happened? The fundamentals of the question put by *The West African Pilot* were disregarded. Mr. Churchill replied through the Acting Chief Secretary of the Nigerian Government in the form of a letter, pointing out that:—

"As explained by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on September 9, 1941, President Roosevelt and the Prime Minister had primarily in mind the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life to the states and nations of Europe now under Nazi rule.

"The declared policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to the people of the British Empire is already entirely in harmony with the high conception of freedom and justice which inspired the Joint Declaration, and the Prime Minister does not consider that any fresh statement of policy is called for in relation to Nigeria or West African colonies generally.

"To suppose, however, that the statement which the Prime Minister made is incompatible with progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in Nigeria or elsewhere shows an evident misunderstanding of words, and any suggestion that this Empire's fight against Nazi tyranny is a fight for the freedom and security of the European race alone is a suggestion which he feels confident all His Majesty's loyal subjects in Nigeria and elsewhere would unite in condemning."

And that is about all that the Atlantic Charter means to the Colonial peoples within the British Empire: That the regime of exploitation and Colonial Fascism under which they now exist is to continue after the war; that the system of Imperialism is to run on indefinitely.

Events in the Far East have taught the British imperialists nothing. Had they enunciated the Atlantic Charter for the Colonial peoples of the Empire as well as for the diverse European nations now under Nazi domination, it is probable that the debacle which has occurred would have been averted. There would certainly not have been so much apathy among the native peoples, nor such active support given to the enemy in certain places.

N:—I think that most of the British public would agree on that score. And also on the point that this continues to be a war full of contradictions.

For instance, recent speeches by leading statesmen of Britain and of the United States have contained statements which people of colour may bear in mind hopefully when the reconstruction of the world begins. Mr. Eden, our Foreign Secretary, said at Edinburgh on May 9, 1942:—

"If there are unemployment and malnutrition and animal standards of life and poverty that can be remedied and are not remedied, in any part of the world, you will jeopardise peace." Let us underline "*in any part of the world.*" Continuing, Mr. Eden declared: "Our purpose in developing our Colonial Empire must not be to gain Colonial advantage for ourselves, nor to exploit transient material opportunities." How will that fit in with Colonial conditions if they remain as they are now, and have been for decades, after victory is won?

Then Mr. Henry A. Wallace, Vice-President of the United States of America, said, in the course of an address to the Free World Association: "Peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China, Latin America. . . . No nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations. The older nations will have the privilege of helping the younger nations to get started on the path of industrialisation, but there must be neither military nor economic imperialism. Those who write the peace must think of the whole world. There can be no privileged peoples. Fundamentally there are no backward peoples, lacking in mechanical sense. Russian, Chinese and Indian children all learn to read and write and operate machines as well as your children and my children." These are very fair words; I mean, they voice intelligent, progressive and scientifically sound sentiments. Has Mr. Wallace looked ahead, I wonder, at the working-out, the putting into practice of these concepts? These, and many other men of state that I could quote, aver in their speeches that ALL the peoples, ALL the races of the world must benefit of the great reconstruction. Now, will the people of colour be taken into account on the same level as those of white blood?

P:—While we welcome the expression of these lofty, human and warm sentiments, they are not enough. First of all—do you not find it significant that Mr. Wallace, while talking of Indians, Russians, Chinese and Latin Americans, omits to make mention of Negroes? These coloured citizens of the United States form a tenth part of the whole population: they now total 13 million people. Why does Mr. Wallace not urge his country to set its own house in order first? Could he not urge the Federal Government to pass the Anti-Lynching Bill that many white as well as coloured Americans have been advocating for twenty years or more? A few months ago there was a lynching in Missouri. More recently, a Negro sergeant was shot dead by a white policeman in Arkansas with no justification. Let Mr. Wallace get the Navy chiefs to allow Negroes into the service in positions other than those of mess-men or menials. Negroes of the United States would certainly be willing to fight for the Democracy of which they hear so much if they could enjoy some of its "benefits." When discrimination against them is ended, when they are permitted to work in war industries and factories side by side with, and on the same footing as white Americans, and when all the Jim Crow, that is to say Colour Bar, customs are done away with, and also the flagrant discrepancies between sentiment and practice, then there will be more belief in statements such as these. What the Negroes demand is first-class citizenship. And until they enjoy this status nobody will be taken in with all this "liberal" talk by men like Wallace.

N:—One remembers that President Roosevelt made an Executive Order banning discrimination in Defence employment. That in itself shows how great is the prejudice against employing Negroes despite the tremendous urgency of the war situation. A revealing study by the Chief of the Negro Employment and Training Branch of the War Production Board, Robert C. Weaver, who is coloured, in the June number of *The Atlantic Monthly*, gives us some figures. A survey was made in September, 1941, of employment prospects for Negroes



in selected Armaments Industries. 69.8 per cent. of aircraft production did not at that time employ coloured workers and did not envisage employing them; 24.3 per cent. did not employ any, but expressed willingness to do so in future; and only 5.9 per cent. had coloured workers. "Significant progress," the article concluded, "has been made since this survey was undertaken."

That the Negro is indispensable, that prejudice is intense, but that it is also recognised as a menace caused the setting up of the Committee on Fair Employment Practices. And here is an interesting fact. Before America came into the war an investigation showed that out of 3,900,000 unemployed 20 per cent. were coloured, although the coloured form 10 per cent. of the total population. Federal Security Administration in 12 months found work for 97,617 people but of these only 853 were coloured. Negroes used to be barred in the constitutions of 24 national unions and the American Federation of Labour has always evinced the greatest prejudice against coloured labour.

On the other hand, the C.I.O. (Congress for Industrial Organisation) the other great Labour body in the States, has always admitted Negroes to its Unions. A Negro, Willard S. Townsend, is President of one of these—the United Transport Service Employees of America—and is a member of the C.I.O.'s National Executive Board. President of the C.I.O., Philip Murray, recently made him a member of the committee set up "to investigate and study the entire problem of equality of opportunity for Negro workers in American industry."

P:—Yes, there is more hope in the field of Labour now than in the past. Startling developments are occurring, and the C.I.O. is playing a big part in this. For instance, The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (a C.I.O. Union, one of the largest) cancelled its last national convention which was to have started on Labour Day in Indianapolis because local hotels refused to accommodate the Negro delegates working in basic war industries. This Union, which has over 400,000 members, protested to the city officials and hotel management as follows:—

"This Union is not only 100 per cent. opposed to such discriminatory practices, but is making in the plants and shops of our industry a big contribution to the whole fight against this and all other forms of Fascism."

Then there has been the Seventh Annual Convention of the United Auto Workers' Union, the largest body of organised workers in America, which endorsed a resolution demanding full democratic rights for the 13,000,000 Negroes in the U.S.A. The Convention, held in Chicago, urged Congress to give the Fair Employment Practices Committee enforcing powers. It asked for a probe into Ku Klux Klan activities, the engaging of Negro women workers in war industries, employment of coloured workers in war plants where none so far were engaged, and inauguration of mixed regiments in the army.

N:—Obviously the C.I.O. is the Negro's most powerful ally in the United States.

P:—To return to the subject of our talks—if I understand you rightly they are to centre round: "What should be done for the coloured and native peoples in Britain's colonies?"

N:—Yes.

P:—Well, this must be said first and foremost: They are no longer satisfied with just the expressions of goodwill and the suggestions of better things in the by-and-by. I find it rather remarkable that no responsible Colonial official has made any statement yet about the future of Colonial subjects. No promises have been made in this war as they were in the last. Perhaps that is only to be expected; the promises were not kept last time; would they be believed now? No, the Colonial peoples do not want promises; they want action, and not of a post-dated kind. What they demand is an immediate translation of the ideals, such as those expressed in what you have quoted, to the concrete

institutions in their respective countries. There are glaring contradictions in so many of the statements made.

For instance: Mr. Eden talks of ameliorating the conditions of the subject peoples. The Foreign Secretary, however, envisages a post-war world still in the terms of Empire and Imperialism. This constitutes the fundamental conflict with our point of view. We want not only the end of Nazism and of Fascism, but also the end of Empire and "democratic" Imperialism. The Colonial peoples have clearly demonstrated their antagonism and their resentment against the Empire by their attitude in Burma, Malaya, etc. Furthermore, we consider that there can be no solution of the economic and social problems of the world, nor any permanent and lasting peace, while the system of Imperialism continues to function—even within the most democratic political structure.

N:—This is the very thing I have come to hear you talk about. Could you formulate some of the reforms that you think the different native peoples would themselves choose?

P:—What we envisage as an ideal solution of post-war reconstruction is the application of Clause 3 of the Atlantic Charter to all peoples, regardless of the stage of their social development. The organisation of the economies of all Colonial territories should be made for the benefit of the peoples there under their own direction and control. Furthermore, we would like to see the collaboration and co-operation of all the lands which now comprise the British Empire put on a Federal basis, evolving towards a Socialist Commonwealth. Such a Federation should have as one of its aims co-operation with the peoples of Europe, of the Americas, and other countries of the world.

N:—Give me a concrete example of how this should work in one of the Colonial territories.

P:—We'll take the West Indies first. There is no fundamental racial or religious antagonism which stands in the way of any immediate advance there. Politically the West Indies have reached the stage where reforms could be instituted at once. Democratic institutions, based upon universal adult suffrage, including fully representative institutions and responsible administration should be set up. This is the form of administration which should be the basis for local self-government in the different islands. The islands should then be federated to form the United West Indies. The Federal administration would assume responsibility for governmental services applicable to all the territories concerned. Economically the natural resources of all the various territories should be nationalised so as to provide a basis for carrying out needed social reforms to be evolved by the respective self-governing units. Such a programme can be applied during the course of the war without impeding the war effort. Rather would it serve as a stimulus to the population by giving them something concrete to fight for as the first step towards the realisation of the New Order in their territories.

N:—Anyone who has been to the West Indies realises at once that the coloured people, who form an overwhelming "national majority" over the whites there, are indeed "Europeanised" or "Westernised Africans" as they have been called. How could it be otherwise after the three centuries of their transplantation from Africa, and because of their constant contact and mingling with the white Antillians? But what of Africa? Would you institute the same kind of reforms there immediately?

P:—With respect to West Africa, a similar approach could be made. The various political institutions should be democratised as speedily as possible. The principle of self-government, territorially as well as municipally and in the villages, should be based on elected councils reflecting the interests of the people in place of so-called Indirect Rule, which is a form of administration imposed upon the African communities from above. As soon as this foundation had been consolidated, the four units—Sierra Leone, Gambia, the Gold Coast,

Nigeria, which now constitute West Africa—should be federated along the lines suggested for the West Indies.

The apparatus of government, both locally and at the centre, should be transferred to Africans, because they can learn the art of government only by practising it. As it is, while the executive and directive authority in the Colonies is in the hands of white men, as heads of government departments, the actual performing of the routine work of administration and the running of daily life are already done by native Africans. This applies to all branches: judiciary, constabulary, civil service, post office and communications, press, transport, education, church, food-distribution, medical service and nursing, health and municipal services, and all the learned professions. In every walk of life Africans constitute the representative elements.

N:—As do coloured West Indians in the British Antilles. Now I should like to hear about the opposition to these reforms.

P:—I would say, briefly, that it is this: The ruling class in Britain, especially those with Colonial interests, is afraid that if the political machinery of government is transferred to the natives, even to the middle-class section of the indigenous population, the way will be open for the more progressive political elements, who are the champions and defenders of the working class, to get control and introduce legislation furthering its economic and social interests. It is this fear which is at the base of Crown Colony government.

N:—I have seen some of that fear myself, a very ugly thing besides causing at times quite ridiculous situations. How does the Crown Colony system operate.

P:—It reserves to itself the right to a majority in the legislature. This majority preserves the economic and imperial interests of the rulers and can hamstring legislation to which they object. In the words of Lord Moyne: "The supreme authority of the Governor must be preserved, and it is essential that he should have the necessary powers of 'certification' and 'veto' . . . It is an essential feature of non-self-governing Colonies that the Executive Committee is purely advisory to the Governor and that matters which come before the Governor in Council are not settled by vote, and that the Governor is not bound to accept the Council's advice." Here, then, is the reason for all opposition to reforms, and particularly to any reform leading to *responsible* self-government.

N:—What is the feeling in the Colonies about the present forms of Government?

P:—At the present moment there is widespread agitation throughout the Empire, or, to use a Whitehall expression, "the non-self-governing sections of the Empire," for constitutional reforms. This should be welcomed, for it indicates political maturity on the part of the subject peoples. You see, *political* self-government is the necessary pre-requisite for bringing about *social* and *economic* amelioration.

N:—That is very interesting. Many people hold that the first reforms should be along economic lines. They lay emphasis on the progressive economic measures symbolised by the new Colonial Welfare Development Scheme put forward by the Colonial Office, which has the support of those concerned with the welfare of Colonial peoples.

P:—No; we want constitutional, that is, political, reforms first. Because unless we have control of the machinery of government in our own hands we shall never be able to institute the necessary new social and economic measures, and, what is more, see that they are carried out. Just so long as the carrying out of such reforms as are promulgated is left in the hands of others there is no guarantee that they will be implemented.

In our next talk I will make some comparisons between the government of Ceylon, which has the most advanced form of Colonial government, and that of the other Colonies.

## CHAPTER II

## HOW BRITAIN RULES

N:—I have been thinking since our last meeting that there is one question to be answered most particularly by those of the coloured races themselves, and it is this: Would you say that colour prejudice has decreased in England since the war began?

P:—No, I would not. I could quote you some instances in which very marked prejudice has been shown against coloured people, Negro and Indian, by people in Great Britain.

N:—Even with the fact that such a number of coloured airmen and soldiers can be seen in the King's uniform, to say nothing of the regiments of Indians and of African Negroes fighting in North Africa, whose prowess there, as also in Ethiopia, has been repeatedly praised in the newspapers and officially commended in Parliament, and the number of African seamen participating in the war effort and its dangers, and the West Indian and African mechanics and technicians doing valuable work in Britain's war factories

P:—Even so! Not only that. Flogging is used as a method of punishment of African soldiers in the British forces

N:—Surely not! It sounds too medieval. I know that corporal punishment was administered in the British Army before we got to be "enlightened," but I was under the impression that it had been done away with a long time ago. I find your assertion very surprising. Can you give me facts?

P:—Let me substantiate my statement with a question which Mr. R. W. Sorensen, Labour M.P., asked the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons on April 3, 1944. For what offences, he inquired, can the punishment of whipping or caning be inflicted on West Africans serving in West African regiments; how many offenders have been so punished during the past two years; if he is satisfied the punishment can only be inflicted by court-martial; and what forms of punishment can be inflicted on West African troops that are not now inflicted in the British Army.

N:—The wording of that question takes it for granted that corporal punishment is inflicted on West Africans, that is obvious.

P:—You will find the reply to the question equally astonishing. It was given by the War Secretary's Parliamentary Secretary, Mr Arthur Henderson, who said: "Corporal punishment may be awarded to West Africans serving in West African regiments for disgraceful conduct in the face of the enemy, mutiny, sedition, disobedience of the command of a superior officer, neglect to obey general orders, desertion and absence without leave. It may only be awarded by sentence of court-martial, and no case of an illegal award has come to notice. I regret that no figures are available of the number of such sentences, but inquiries are being made into this. Apart from corporal punishment, the same punishments are awarded to British as to West African troops, but the circumstances involving the award of fines and imprisonment differ to some extent." Mr. Sorensen followed up by asking whether there had been any occasion when British troops have been so flogged, and Mr. Henderson was quite categorical. "British troops are not flogged," he said. Mr. Sorensen then pertinently enquired: "Then why is there discrepancy between the treatment of black and white troops." This question was evaded by Mr. Henderson, who asked for written notice of it, and Mr. Sorensen brought the matter up again on April 18, 1944, when he asked the Secretary of State for War if the offences for which corporal punishment may be administered to West African troops are similar in other Colonial regiments; and if he has, or will secure, any record of such punishments respecting their nature and frequency.

Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, told Mr. Sorensen that "The

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only Colonial Forces which have provision for corporal punishment are those in West and East Africa. The nature of the offences for which East African troops are liable to corporal punishment is similar to that in the West African forces." Still pursuing the matter, Mr. Sorensen asked: "Could the right hon. Gentleman say why there is this discrimination between West and East African troops on the one hand, and other Colonial troops? Could he also say when this barbarous and sadistic punishment arose?" Sir James Grigg said that Mr. Sorensen "must be aware that the War Office had merely taken over these forces since the outbreak of war, and took over with them the disciplinary codes, which are matters of Colonial legislation. If the Hon. Member wants any information on both the matters he has now raised, he had better address a question to the Colonial Secretary." (See *Hansard*, April 13 and April 18, 1944)

N:—There are two terrible facts which would seem to emerge from the questions and answers you have just quoted, namely, that corporal punishment as a corrective for Africans is taken for granted and as a matter of course, since it would appear from Sir James Grigg's statement that Colonial legislation makes provision for it; and secondly, that even when Africans are fighting alongside Europeans to maintain democracy in Europe they are denied the same treatment as those Europeans even in the question of punishments. That to me is terribly wrong and smacks much more of the practices which we are presumed to be fighting to efface than democracy. But I hope that wide publicity was given to the matter and that the African troops found champions and supporters in our Press. After all, there should be something to distinguish the British Press from the Fascist variety.

P:—I wish I could say that were true. But unfortunately it is not the case. With the exception of certain Left-wing papers like the I.L.P. *New Leader*, which is always a staunch champion of the Colonial peoples, *The Tribune*, which now and again puts forward their grievances, the *Glasgow Forward* and one or two others which are seriously concerned for the well-being of the Coloured peoples of the Empire, there was only one single paper which commented on the issue, and that was the organ of the Co-operative Party, *Reynolds News*. Referring to the matter in its issue of December 10, 1944, it said: "It is a shock to learn that corporal punishment is meted out to our coloured Allies, and a great sorrow to read the flimsy excuse Sir James Grigg put forward by way of upholding it. . . . That there should be any Colour Bar when men are laying down their lives and giving 'all they had hoped for' is monstrous, and quite out of keeping with the principles of a free country." Returning to the subject a week later (December 17, 1944), the same paper maintained: "It will no doubt come as a shock to British people to learn that their fellow-African subjects serving with the Forces are subject to corporal punishment. Repeated representations to the War Office have been unsuccessful in securing the abolition of this practice.

"Sir James Grigg justifies the use of this barbarous form of punishment on the grounds of maintaining discipline among African troops. White and other Imperial troops are not subject to this mode of keeping discipline.

"East and West African troops rendered yeoman service in the Abyssinian and East African campaigns, and are now sharing the brunt of the fighting against the Japanese in Burma. Surely they are entitled to a finer expression of gratitude from their British trustees?"

N:—Well, I am glad that at least one national paper made its protest. I suppose the Africans and other Coloured people have taken the matter very much to heart?

P:—They have indeed. Of course, there isn't a great deal they can do about it in the present state of things except to register their protest and this they have done most vigorously. African newspapers like the *African Standard* in Sierra

Leone and *The West African Pilot* of Nigeria have made representations to the authorities through their columns and the intermediary of their editors. Over here, Negro organisations like the International African Service Bureau, and others, have held well-attended protest meetings, and from reports and enquiries I have had from the large Negro population in Cardiff, I understand that they are most resentful and indignant over the business and besides calling protest meetings, are raising questions with the local parliamentary member.

N:—I am glad you have raised this matter in some detail, because it goes down to the very foundations of the whole Colonial system. But where did we leave off last?

P:—I was saying that I am in favour of full self-government and complete autonomy for the Colonies in their internal administration. This would take the form of fully elected representative Councils based upon universal adult suffrage free from any restrictions by way of income or property qualifications. Candidates for Membership should likewise not be subject to property qualifications. The veto powers of Government should be completely abolished. The elected members of the Councils should be not only *representatives* of the people, but also *responsible* to them. This is what I am advocating for all the Colonies. But all are not yet themselves asking for this; they have not all reached this stage as yet.

N:—What about Ceylon, the most advanced form of Colonial government?

P:—There the form of government is fully *representative*, but it is not yet *responsible*. Ceylon is now asking for the latter form, and that the veto powers of the Governor be abolished.

Jamaica, which we may call "the second type of Colony," has been asking for both *representative* and *responsible* government. The Colonial Office is prepared to grant one form only—*representative*. It says it will give Jamaica what Ceylon has. But Ceylon and also Jamaica, to my mind, should be granted both forms. Looking back—the Donoughmore Commission, which was sent out to Ceylon in 1927, made certain recommendations in connection with the new Constitution; these were watered down by the Labour Government, that is, by Lord Passfield, when it was promulgated in 1929.

N:—And how does West Africa, which is the most advanced section of the British Colonies in Africa, compare with Ceylon and Jamaica?

P:—What West Africa is asking for is not even representative government. All that is asked for is universal adult suffrage, a majority of elected members on the Councils; the introduction of municipal government, and the abolition of Indirect Rule. Let me quote a recent discussion in the House of Commons in which Mr. Reginald Sorensen embodied the demands and aspirations of West Africa:

Mr. Sorensen asked: "Whether the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies will, in view of the relevant clauses in the Atlantic Charter, announce plans for the more rapid democratisation of West African institutions including the native authorities; whether he will frame proposals to establish adult franchise, to eliminate official majorities on legislative councils, to appoint at least six Africans to the Governor's Executive Council in each Colony and ensure that a majority on municipal councils should be Africans; and whether African democratic organisations and personalities will be consulted to this end?"

This is the answer that Mr. Harold Macmillan, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, gave him:

"It continues to be the policy to introduce representative institutions in West Africa as the local populations become ready for them. But His Majesty's Government could not lend themselves to the pretence of framing proposals for establishing adult franchise in communities where that system can have no reality." There were already nominated

African members representing local communities on the Legislative Councils "well qualified to advise the Governors on constitutional questions."

Mr Sorensen then said "Does the right Hon. Gentleman appreciate that his reply will not give satisfaction to West Africans?" The proposals which had been put forward for West Africa had the support of representative Africans, and was it not necessary that the Government "make some great endeavour to impress West Africans with our determination to assist their political progress?"

But Mr. Macmillan replied that it was "very difficult to deal with the matter by question and answer," and "it requires much more general discussion of the large number of important problems which arise from the question."

This is the kind of thing that goes on in the supreme forum of the British Empire! West Africans are denied adult suffrage because it is felt that this would have *no reality* in their communities! However, Lord Moyne, whom I have already quoted, is less ambiguous: "*The supreme authority of the Governor must be preserved, and it is essential that he should have the necessary powers of 'certificate' and 'veto'*"—these are his words.

N:—What is the difference between the Governments of Ceylon and of Jamaica—the two most advanced Colonial methods of administration?

P:—The Legislature of Ceylon is called the State Council and is composed of 53 members. Forty-three are elected by universal adult suffrage and the other 10 are nominated by the Governor and are either government officials or representatives of vested interests.

Jamaica has at present a Council of 14 elected members and 14 nominated by the Governor; some are officials, some unofficial, or business men. The proposed reforms would increase the 14 elected members to 28; the nominated ones would be reduced from 14 to 1.\*

Other Colonies such as Trinidad, Gold Coast, Nigeria, etc., have constitutions which provide for three types of members:—

(1) Councils composed of official members nominated by the Governor as heads of various Government departments, known as "nominated official members."

(2) Nominated unofficial members.

(3) Elected members.

N:—What sort of people are they generally?

P:—Club associates of the Governor. You see, the Governor comprises in his person a kind of trinity. As representative of the King, he is Viceroy; as head of the Executive, he is Prime Minister; when he sits in the Legislature, he is the Speaker. He is, as it were, omnipotent, and his right to nominate members is unquestioned. So in the Legislature you will find the Planters' Association, the Bankers' Association, the Merchants' Association, and the Shipping Association. If, within the territory, there is a minority of any importance, its representatives are also there. Now, in the Council the members sit round a horseshoe-shaped table. The official members face the Governor; on his right sit the unofficial members, and on his left are the elected members, mandated on a restricted franchise.

In Africa a certain number of native chiefs sits among the Europeanised African members. However, of the four West African Colonies, Gambia has no elected members. In the East African Colonies there are neither elected or nominated Africans in the Legislatures. The Governor usually nominates some missionary or retired official to represent the Africans.†

In Malaya, until the British were "run out," as General Stillwell put it, the British ruled through native Sultans. This was a form of Indirect Rule, a

\* See Chapter IV—West Indian Constitutions

† See Chapter V—Political Reforms in Africa

form widespread in Africa in territories known as "protected areas." In Singapore there was a Legislative Council of 11 members nominated by the Governor, both official and unofficial. There were only two elected members and they were Europeans representing the European Chambers of Commerce of Singapore and Penang; that is, the interests of the rubber planters and business men. Among the nominated members may have been a Chinese member, to represent the rather large Chinese population.

N:—Now, after hearing about Crown Colony I should like you to tell me about "Indirect Rule." How does it function?

P:—Indirect Rule is the mode of government carried out through local chiefs under the supervision of British officials. Its origin is most interesting, particularly as its apologists are silent as to how it was built up from beginnings forced upon its innovator, Lord Lugard, from sheer expediency. They hold it up as an example of British genius in not disturbing native institutions while guiding them towards responsible self-government. This view is sheer nonsense, as the facts will demonstrate.

In 1900, the Royal Niger Company, an organisation of merchant adventurers, relinquished the charter it had been granted in 1885. The Foreign Office took over and sent Colonel Lugard to develop British power in the hinterland as a means of stopping French and German encroachments on the northern parts of Nigeria. With a native army recruited from the Hausa people, Lugard marched northward and completed the conquest of the Mohammedan sultanates of Kano and Sokoto. This was at the beginning of the century, when the Home Government was busy with the Boer War and in no position to send him reinforcements to quell hostile tribes and guerilla bands. Faced with the immediate problem of establishing some form of administration to maintain "law and order," Lugard was obliged to improvise. It had been the British custom to banish chiefs once they had surrendered, but Lugard was forced to make use of them. He invested them with administrative powers, promised to respect their religion and customs, but made it clear that they were responsible to their British over-lords—who, in the words of Margery Perham (lecturer at Oxford on Colonial administration), were now "over all."

So, making a virtue of necessity, Lugard introduced "Indirect Rule" which, with many amendments, has become the favoured means of British rule in Colonial territories. In practice, a diffuse native bureaucracy has been superimposed upon the old feudal and tribal systems. The chiefs are no longer subject to the democratic control of their people, but derive their powers direct from the Government by whom they are controlled and supervised.

Indirect Rule was soon discovered by British officials in Nigeria to be a cheap method of governing wide stretches inhabited by primitive peoples. The experience and views of the earlier political officers were collected and later rationalised into a new philosophy of Colonial government. The present complex machinery of administration has been elaborated out of the first crude makeshift. Native administration has political powers of a most limited kind, but powers of function which make it the catspaw of the Imperialist rulers, and the scapegoat for all forms of mis-rule and despotism. To "maintain law and order," administer "justice," collect taxes, and supply forced labour, are its principal functions. The native administration is presided over by a Paramount Chief, who is assisted by a Council of sub-chiefs and headmen whose composition is subject to the approval of the Central Government. Connecting-links between African administration and Central Government are the British officials, the Residents, Provincial and District Commissioners. Directed by the advice of these men, the chief is in a position to exercise the greatest despotism.

N:—Would it be correct to think that, of the two, Crown Colony and Indirect Rule, the former system contains more scope for Democracy?

P:—I am opposed to both systems, for they are simply methods of achieving the same end: the maintenance of Imperialist domination. However, apologists for Imperialism make out that Indirect Rule is a conscious policy instituted to induct backward peoples in the art of self-government. But, as already explained, under this system the chiefs are merely pawns in the hands of the Colonial administration. All intelligent and progressive elements are opposed to it. Margery Perham, its official apologist, who is always extolling it as Democracy's gift to backward Africans, has been obliged to record the criticism levelled against it. "Most educated Africans," she writes in *Africans and British Rule*, "especially in West Africa and the Sudan, criticise and strongly condemn Indirect Rule. They say that it gives power to uneducated chiefs and elders instead of to the educated; that it strengthens tribal feeling and so continues the disunity of the country. It is, they say, part of the old policy of 'divide and rule' by which an Imperial Power keeps its subjects weak and prevents their advance towards self-government." That is very succinctly put and exactly describes the growing attitude towards this form of Imperial mis-rule.

N:—Then, obviously, a change of governmental form is necessary?

P:—Most certainly. But apart from the necessity of having a Council and responsible government in order to institute plans for the amelioration of the conditions of the peoples generally, constitutional control of the apparatus of government would enable us to revoke and rescind all obnoxious legislation of a semi-Fascist kind, such as: Colour Bar, Pass Laws, Forced Labour Regulations, Child Labour, Direct Taxation in the form of Hut and Poll Levies, etc. All of these have come into being as legal forms following legislation. Quite lately there has been introduced into Kenya the regulation making forced labour compulsory for all males from 16 to 65. This has been provided by enactment of the Governor-in-Council, in order to afford a plentiful supply of the cheapest kind of labour for the planters of the Colony.

N:—There are Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories—What is the difference between Colony and Protectorate?

P:—The names are arbitrary divisions only.

N:—And what about Mandates?

P:—They are the same as Colonies; they have Governors and Councils. The only difference is that when the Governor writes his annual report for the Colonial Office, he makes an extra copy which is sent to a Committee sitting in Geneva. That is all it amounts to in the way of difference. For instance, for government purposes the Cameroons is incorporated in Nigeria and subject to exactly the same legislation.

N:—Are Governors subject to revision from London?

P:—In theory, the Governor and his Council can legislate for the territory under his jurisdiction. Legally-enacted legislation may be rejected by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London, who has over-riding powers to throw out any Bill which the Colonial Legislature may pass.

N:—Have all measures to be submitted to Whitehall?

P:—No. Only when opposition in the Colony is reflected through the Council and they appeal to the Colonial Secretary, who is called in to arbitrate the issue. Let us presume that a quarrel has arisen between some of the Council and the Governor. The Secretary of State may then say: "Your Excellency, I think this measure should not be passed." But normally, when the Governor intends to introduce a new law, it is usually discussed in the Executive (not the Legislative) Council; all Bills must be proposed by the Governor. The Executive Council is the Governor's Cabinet, as it were, but is advisory only and he need not accept its advice. When the Bill has been agreed upon in the Executive, the Governor has the text of it drawn up by the Attorney-General, who then reads it in the Legislative Council; there may be three meetings to discuss it there, but members have no power to throw it out. If they feel

strongly against it they may send representations to the Colonial Office. Although it has been passed into law the Governor will not operate it as yet, and so what you might call "a constitutional crisis" arises.

N:—How are representations made to the Colonial Office?

P:—They cannot be sent direct; and although the conflict is with the Governor they have to be sent through the Governor. It is a good thing to forward a copy to an English M.P. at the same time. The Governor adds his own marginal notes, and the Secretary of State, on receiving the grievance, takes the advice of the Under-Secretary of the department concerned (a permanent official qualified as an expert), and a reply is drafted. This comes to the Governor, who reports it back to the Legislative Council. That is the way it works. Like appealing from Caesar to Caesar.

So once more you see that if the Legislature were in the hands of the people's representatives and controlled by them such legislation would not come up. The fundamental question is, therefore, control of legislation.

N:—One of the arguments against this is that in many Colonies "the natives are not yet ripe for it."

P:—It is quite true that in the Colonial Empire as a whole there are sections which are much more advanced than others. The West Indies have reached a higher degree of civilisation because of their longer contact with Western culture and its assimilation. The people there, as a whole, are Christians, their mother tongue to-day is English; ways and customs, virtues and vices of Europe have become their own. These people are Westernised Africans.

On the African continent the process of assimilation has not reached the same stage. However, in certain parts, especially in Sierra Leone, and in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Gambia, there are Europeanised African communities. What applies in general to the West Indies is also applicable to Ceylon, Mauritius, British Guiana, British Honduras, the Bahamas. In all of these exists an intellectual elite, the native bourgeoisie, which is the class constituting the vanguard of the progressive political movements. It is nonsense to say that such people are incapable of managing the affairs of their respective countries. For they and their sons have studied at American and European Universities and represent, in the main, several generations of culture and political consciousness.

In the less advanced areas, such as the hinterland territories of Africa, generally known as Protectorates, in the Fiji Islands, Malaya, and other parts where tribal or semi-feudal social institutions still persist, thanks to Imperialism, which does everything to foster and maintain them, there are not such large Europeanised communities. However, despite all the obstacles and difficulties put in their way, the inexorable laws of human progress are taking shape, and from the younger elements emerges a class of natives which is dissatisfied with the *status quo* and which is demanding access to wider and fuller social conditions. The advent of these could be hastened by democratising the political institutions which exist there—a policy which British Imperialism shows no desire to follow, war or no war.

N:—The policy of keeping people backward, and without education at all, is a conscious one. For the last 150 years Imperialism has been governing these Colonies, and in India there are still 80 per cent. who are illiterate. By the way—do you remember a remarkable book, *How About Europe?* It is by Norman Douglas and in it many startling facts about Europe and India are contrasted. Of India he says:—

"There are about 229,000,000 people who can neither read nor write. The peasants living in 750,000 villages belong to this class." A little further he adds: "Critics of Hindu illiteracy should not forget that British rule is largely responsible for it. By the Institutes of Manu, the parent was obliged to place his child at school in his fourth year. At the beginning of last century there

were schools in every Indian village; in sweeping away the village system we have simultaneously swept away the schools. John Bright complained, in 1853, that while our Government had almost wholly overthrown the universally existing native education, it had done nothing to supply the deficiency. Ten years ago only one penny per head was spent on education in British-ruled India, whereas Russia was spending between sevenpence and eightpence." He then quotes G. T. Garratt's *An Indian Commentary*. "One cannot fail to deplore the rapid decadence, probably more rapid than the official figures show of independent educational institutions."

This book was published first in 1928, so the "ten years ago" was 1918—yet even then Russia in her first year of liberation from the Tsarist regime and in the midst of the struggle was spending seven and eight times as much on education as British-ruled India!!! Imperialism is nothing if not well thought-out! Incidentally, as we are on the subject of India—I have just re-read two admirable books: Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle*, about Ceylon, published in 1913, and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, which appeared in 1924, both of which have gone into innumerable editions. When you have read these you feel you have learned a good deal, that is, you have a start on the whole Indian question. I have never been to India, but knowing the West Indian Colonies and something of the poor Indians of Trinidad I can see it all well. Both these authors were in the administration for years, so they know what they are writing about, and as each is very honest besides being a fine artist the reader is confronted with a whole new world of truth.

One puts down Woolf's beautiful tragic book with a feeling not short of abysmal despair—that is, if things are to go on like this for ever. And Forster's remarkable ironic tragedy one ends with a sense of the utter futility, sadness, and ridicule, too, of race relations as here depicted. I mean, once more, if none of this is ever to change.

I should like to know just how the difficulties the Russians encountered at first in the adjustment of their great new social system among their so-numerous race groups compare with the monumental scale of the racial complexities of India. Or are these not really so inherently great, but built up by us? I would bet on the latter. And I am sure the Russians would tackle all this very well. Don't imagine for a moment that I think the British *incapable* of that. Oh, no. I have a great belief in the British. But *which* British? Let me tell you. The kind I have in mind are like the young engineer I know, and his fiancée, who is a schoolmistress; both are about twenty-four years old: studious, thoughtful, constructive, specialised in their own vocations, hating all race complexes, full of initiative—and also full of fun. We cannot do much that is good without putting a bit of love into things (as the French say), and a bit of humour. You will notice that these are qualities one may call those of "human values." There are many people like these, mainly but not only young people, in Great Britain, the Dominions and the Colonies—everywhere. They don't get much of a hearing as yet. But what is "After the War" for if not for people like this? People like this are very concerned indeed about our Colonies; they want, and intend, to know them, to go and study there, some of them to work there for the welfare of the different regions as a whole. All of them say that we must have a wide exchange of Colonials, coloured and white, coming over here to us, just as we, technicians of different kinds, should go over to them. I will write a series of articles about this one day soon! However—this is a digression. So—back to Imperialism, and backwards!

P:—There you are—backwardness is an economic question. The conscious policy of Imperialism is to keep Colonial economies backward and Colonial peoples ignorant. As long as such countries remain mere agrarian appendages to the "mother country," that is, sources of raw materials and also markets for manufactured commodities, there is no need to educate the people.

Imperialism cultivates a small section of native intellectuals to man the lower offices and functions of the Civil Service and of commerce. If the countries were industrialised it would be essential to increase education, since it is impossible to carry on industry with uneducated workers. And here one can pay a tribute to the missionaries—despite the fact that they were largely instrumental in bringing the territories under white domination. Were it not for the missionaries the percentage of illiteracy would be even greater, for they were the pioneers of such organised education as does exist. Only within very recent years have Colonial Governments granted subsidies for missionary education work, and only here and there have they provided elementary and secondary education. Much can be read about this in Norman Leys's book, *The Colour Bar in East Africa*.

This takes me back to my original premise. Unless the natives have control of their government, that is, of their finances, this educational problem can never be solved. Those who now control Parliament know this problem, but it is against their interests to solve it.

Now, consider this: Hitler went into territories where the people had a high civilisation, a high degree of literary culture, with schools, universities and academies. What are the Nazis doing there? "De-literatising" them. They are closing the cultural and educational institutions, because an Imperialist power can only rule an ignorant, oppressed people. Wherever an "advanced" people is found, for the purposes of Imperialism it must be "de-enlightened."

When Britain went into Africa and India she found illiterate people with no organised education and she decided to keep them as they were. This is the only way to maintain Imperialism, as must be clear. It does not necessarily flow out of evil intentions; for Imperialism can be run only according to certain fundamental laws. At certain stages it can be more cruel, ruthless and brutal than at others. After the regime is set up and stabilised certain relaxations can be made. I am sure that British rule in Ceylon is more humane and more enlightened than it was a hundred years ago. Because it is more secure. As rule becomes more secure it is not afraid of internal enemies. But when insecure—that is when a Hitler or a Mussolini comes upon the scene.

N:—There is also economic backwardness. In what proportion, I wonder, is this due to lack of initiative of the people themselves?

P:—Well, let us take as an example the Gold Coast, which produces cocoa, or Nigeria, which produces palm oil. These are two raw materials which, given certain ingredients, would allow the natives to manufacture margarine, oils, soaps, etc. This would provide a new industry and thereby relieve the congested rural areas, improve the economic conditions of the industrial workers, and incidentally, their cultural condition. An internal market would come into being thus for manufactured commodities. But what prevents all this? Let us see—Is it money you want? Form a co-operative, say 50,000 members, each paying £1 in the course of one year. That is £50,000. Machinery is then bought in England or America; the factory will be set up. But in order to do this permission must first be obtained from the Governor. How are you going to get permission from a Legislature which is composed of vested interests? Not that a direct refusal will be given. Oh, no; that would make things much too obvious. But the conditions imposed would be found most difficult to comply with—as simple as that.

Or let us suppose that the Council gives its consent, that conditions are not too onerous and that the factory is established. Soap is going to be made, and will be sold at a price that suits the people's pocket. What happens? The soap monopoly "way back" in London finds that its sales are falling off. The Nigerians are buying their own local product, which is cheaper. What does the soap monopoly then do? How much money, it asks, have Nigerian manufacturers put into their business, £50,000? Over go large consignments of

soap, which are distributed free to the people. And the local factory, unable to sell its supplies, unable to draw in more capital, is obliged to close down.

N:—A Cingalese gave me a beautiful example of this. There was a local cigarette in Ceylon selling at three a penny. "Elephants" they were called, and everybody began to smoke them. Brands from England were left on the shelves. What happened then? Over came the well-known makes from England—but not at their previous price, no. Now they were sold at six a penny! And what happened to "Elephants"? They just disappeared.

P:—These things raise the question of monopoly capital. Under the present system it is all-powerful. Indigenous industries cannot possibly grow in such circumstances, and because they would compete with those of the metropolitan country everything is done to obstruct their establishment and growth. If the Colonial peoples had control of the Legislature laws could be passed to protect the native industries, laws which would prevent them from being systematically thwarted by monopoly interests.

N:—What examples of the fate of local industries! This kind of thing must figure largely among the foremost grievances of indigenous Colonial peoples. We have not yet examined the principal grievances. I should like you to outline them in brief, and, at the same time, with a little detail.

P:—Yes, gladly, and I will do this when we have our next talk.

### CHAPTER III

#### A CHARTER FOR THE COLONIES

N:—We were talking last about the effects of monopoly capital and you gave concrete examples of this. But there are many other grievances, and also not a few books that examine them, with varying degrees of solution, such as Lord Haley's *African Survey*, and works by Raymond Buell, Norman Leys and Leonard Barnes. Tell me something about the principal grievances in Africa.

P:—In Africa grievances are racial, economic and social. The economic ones are closely associated with the Land problem. In East and South Africa the natives have been dispossessed of their land by the European colonists, and concentrated into special areas known as "Reserves." Then they are subjected to direct "levy" in the form of hut and poll taxes. This has the effect of forcing them out of their Reserves to seek employment on the plantations or in the mines; all of these are in the hands of private settlers or of joint stock companies. To get the money for their Government-imposed tax the Africans are literally forced to accept whatever wages are offered, either by the individual employers or the companies. In most of the areas I am speaking of it is illegal for them to combine for collective bargaining. Especially is this so in the Union of South Africa, which is under Dominion administration.

In the East African colonies Trade Unionism has been legalised since 1940, but the rights remain largely on paper. The employer class, closely identified with the official class, has found ways of getting round the carrying out of the new Trade Union laws.

Then, apart from the lack of land and the prevalence of very low wages, Africans are subject to special racial regulations, known as "Colour Bar." In South Africa there is a particularly harsh form of Colour Bar.\*

N:—Let me read you some lines out of Professor W. M. Macmillan's booklet, *Democratise the Empire*, published in 1941. He is a member of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, an expert on Africa, and

\* See Chapter V—Political Reform in Africa.

also on the West Indies—as shown in his excellent *Warning from the West Indies* (in Penguin edition). Of South Africa he writes:—

"The Union of 1910 made no extension of Native Franchise. Instead, a long series of legislative measures openly defensive of white privileges, and repressive at least of black aspirations, culminated in the Native Franchise Act of 1936. In this Act Cape influence prevailed only to the extent that Native interests are now directly represented by a maximum of seven Europeans, elected on a separate register to a Parliament of approximately 200 members. The South African Union is therefore a dominion of a white democracy over a politically powerless black majority."

P:—That speaks for the political side! And you know there is a law which prohibits the Native from engaging in skilled or semi-skilled work.

N:—What is the attitude of the white workers to this discrimination?

P:—It is unfortunate, but true, that the white workers in South Africa were largely instrumental in placing Colour Bar regulations on the statute book. In 1924, the Nationalist Party—the political organisation of the agricultural section of white South Africa, which is largely Boer—contested the general election under the leadership of General Hertzog. Chief opponents of the Nationalists were those of the South African Party, the organ of the industrialists and mining financiers, who are mainly British. The leader of this party was then General Smuts. Incidentally, this is why Smuts is such a favourite of the City of London. In order to strengthen their chances of success, Hertzog and the Nationalists made an alliance with the South African Labour Party, led by Colonel Cresswell. As the price for the support of Labour, Hertzog promised that his government would introduce racial legislation to protect white labour against the competition of coloured labour. This coalition, Nationalist-Labour, did win, and among the first Bills introduced in the South African Parliament after the 1924 general election was the Colour Bar Act, which laid down that the mining companies must employ only Europeans in all the better-paid jobs. As a result of this discrimination the European worker has been guaranteed a minimum rate of 20s. a day, while the average wage of a Negro miner is 2s. 6d.!

Colour Bar regulations spread to other industries; to-day they cover all forms of occupational vocation in which white workers are engaged, such as dockers, railwaymen, etc. Similar legislation exists in Southern Rhodesia, which, unlike the Union of South Africa, is under Dominion Office supervision as far as legislation affecting Africans is concerned.

In March, 1942, the Kenya Government, with the approval of the Colonial Office, legalised forced labour for plantation purposes, and in the East African colonies Colour Bar exists in practice. Africans between the ages of 16 and 55 are now liable to be called out for work on the white settlers' plantations in the Highlands for an average daily wage of 3½d. This may be implemented up to 7d. a day where rations are provided by the employer.

Since the loss of Malaya and its tin resources, similar laws have been introduced in Nigeria. Here natives between 18 and 45 are liable for forced labour in the tin mines. Generally speaking it can be said that the land problem here, in West Africa, is not as acute as in South and East Africa.

Do not think that this is owing to any particular virtue in Imperialism. Nothing of the sort. It was a dispensation of providence! It had its origins in the devitalising climate of the West Coast and the fact that prophylactics did not come into use until fairly recently. You remember how this part of the Dark Continent was always referred to as "The white man's grave." And since Europeans did not migrate in any number to West Africa there has been little alienation of land for plantations. This circumstance it is which has made these territories the "model" colonies in Africa. Not the kind-heartedness of Imperialists, but the *mosquito* has rescued 28 million natives of Nigeria, Gold

Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia from the worst effects of European colonisation. There are only about 9,000 whites in West Africa, mainly traders, officials, missionaries, commercial agents, etc.

Generally speaking then, the land in West Africa, or at least what is on the surface of it, has not been alienated,\* and the African native races, most of whom have access to more of it than those in any other part of the whole continent save, possibly, Uganda, are responsible for the carrying on of agriculture. However, they have been induced to restrict their production to commercial crops, to the virtual exclusion of food crops. This has received official sanction. Consequently, all necessities such as milk, rice, flour, sugar, meat and even fish are imported in canned form!

Land tenure of course varies. In the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, for instance, all land is controlled by the Government and the peasants are tenants-at-will of the Crown. The Egba chiefs, of whom you will doubtless remember the Alake of Abeokuta, are its custodians in Yorubaland and other Southern Provinces. In their capacity of native administrators, they allot sections of it to the people in accordance to their needs, these allotments being worked in conformity with traditional usage. Under the Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance of 1917, land may not be disposed of to non-members of a tribe. In many places, however, tribal custom has broken down, as in the regions round the capital, Lagos, and many chiefs and influential natives own large cocoa properties worked by hired labour. Similar native landlordism is developing in the Gold Coast—an inevitable development wherever a money-economy is introduced.

N:—Taking it by and large, would you say that West Africans have avoided the worst features of colonisation?

P:—No subject people can escape the depredations of Imperialism. They are bound to feel them one way or another. If West Africans have not suffered widespread alienation of their land, nevertheless they are as badly exploited as are their brothers in East and South Africa. In their case, not as agricultural labourers, but as producers for the foreign market. While left in possession of their lands because of climatic conditions, they have been encouraged by the British Government to cultivate almost exclusively commercial crops, as I have just said. Gold Coast and Nigeria are the two largest cocoa-producing areas in the world. Nigeria and Sierra Leone are great exporters of palm oil and palm kernels, while Gambia produces ground nuts (peanuts). Production is carried on by native farmers with the assistance of their families, usually on small lots. *But the marketing of these crops is in the hands of the Monopoly Combines.*

Among these, United Africa Company, a subsidiary of Unilever, has perhaps the widest tentacles. Its ramifications absorb the whole of West African economy. There is nothing too small or too large for this millionaire concern; it spurns nothing in which it sees profit. In the Gold Coast it has united with the large chocolate firms, J. Lyons and Co., Cadbury Bros., and others, to form a "pool." At the beginning of harvest this "pool" fixes the prices it will pay the natives for the season's cocoa crop. Working hand in hand with the local banks, shipping and insurance companies and the West Africa section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, the "pool" strangles the African farmer.

Besides being buyers, these large companies are also sellers. They own and control the sale of food, clothing, tools and all the manufactured commodities which the African farmer is obliged to buy at their stores. They fix their own

\* In February, 1944, the Governor of Nigeria passed a bill through the local Legislature giving the Government the right to take possession of all minerals discovered on land in the possession of Africans. This law strikes at the very foundation of the native land tenure system, and is being strongly opposed by the entire Nigerian population.

prices, and receive back from the natives any moneys they have paid to him as purchasers of his crops.

In 1937-38, the farmers of the Gold Coast held up their crop, and at the same time the entire population carried out a boycott of British goods. This was the only direct means they had of opposing the "squeeze" that the monopolies were working on them. Of course, a Royal Commission went out and made its report, and then came the war—no settlement was reached. Now the British Government buys the cocoa crop at a fixed price agreed upon by the Chairman of the Cocoa Board at the Ministry of Food, who, not by chance I am sure, turns out to be Mr. John Cadbury.\*

The situation with the palm industry in Nigeria is practically the same; only, in this case, United Africa is alone in the field. Since 1924, the price has been depressed to such a level that the Nigerian farmer finds it almost impossible to live. Ground nuts maintain economy in Gambia. Without this crop the Colony would be bankrupt, since the export-tax on the product is almost the sole source of revenue.

N:—All of this certainly gives an idea of how it is with agricultural matters in Africa. Now tell me something about industry.

P:—Exploitation in the mines has reached a considerable degree of intensity, especially in the Gold Coast and the northern part of Nigeria. Around these mines are centred large industrial populations completely divorced from the soil. Here conditions approximate those in South Africa as far as wages and labour are concerned. There is no Colour Bar as in the Union of South Africa, for the simple reason that there are no white workers. Most of them are Africans, and as mining develops there is a growing tendency to squeeze the peasants off the land. Tin and coal are the minerals chiefly mined in Nigeria; gold, diamonds and manganese in the Gold Coast; and diamonds and iron ore in Sierra Leone.

In Nigeria the mineral rights belong to the Government, who took over from the Niger Company in 1900. This Company has now merged into United Africa Company, which has a 99-year lien on more than half of the mineral rights. Coal mines at Enugu are operated by the Government, while private companies have been granted concessions to work the tin mines of the Bauchi plateau. In Sierra Leone mineral rights are also vested in the Government, which makes concessions to companies working deposits. A monopoly to exploit diamonds for 99 years was secured by the Consolidated African Selection Trust in 1934, at a fixed annual rental of £7,000. The Sierra Leone Development Company, a British concern, works the iron ore at Marampa, one of the largest iron mines in Africa.

Under the Ashanti Concessions Ordinance of 1903, mineral rights in the Gold Coast remain with the native authorities, but negotiations in connection with concessions are supervised by the European District Commissioners and the Government has control over all moneys derived from these sales. The concessions are not worked on a royalty basis, but at a fixed rental, often as low as £50 and nowhere exceeding £400 a year.

Natives employed in these mines form the largest proportion of industrial workers in West Africa. Wages are incredibly low, and despite constant demands for increases to meet the rising cost of living, as well as recommendations from various Commissions, there has been no increase. In the Government-owned coal mines, rates vary from 5s. 8d. to 15s. 5d. a week for the different grades, and it is estimated that a married surface-worker with a wife and two children spends, say, 2s. in rent and 7s. in food, against a wage of 5s. 8d. In the privately-owned tin mines the average weekly wage is 3s. 6d. for regular

\* In a White Paper, issued in September, 1944 (Cmd. 654), it was revealed that the British Government made a profit of £3,676,253 between 1939 and 1943 on its cocoa marketing.



labour. Casual labour is paid as little as 2s. 8d. Women and children employed at the coal mines receive even less than the men.

N:—Just as they do in the cane-fields and cocoa woods of Trinidad, although the women do the same kind of work and certainly have the same expenses in the way of food as do the men. What sort of general conditions are there in these mining centres?

P:—The all-round conditions are as pitiful as can possibly be and social legislation is practically non-existent.

N:—And what about the prosperous class that exists in West Africa?

P:—The more well-to-do of the farmers have been able to send their children to better schools or to provide them with higher education either locally or abroad. These educated or "Europeanised" Africans constitute the intelligentsia of the West African colonies. They represent the vanguard of the national and progressive movements which to-day are voicing increasingly the political and economic aspirations of the African people. This is a natural development.

Among all subject peoples, whether in Africa, India or the West Indies, it is always the middle-class intellectuals who form the most articulate section of the native races. And as industrialisation, such as it is—mining and small-scale factories—begins to develop, a working class, as distinct from the peasantry, is brought into being.

N:—Is it possible for this prosperous class to open up in an industrial way?

P:—Well, it can buy property and become relatively rich as landlords. But as for opening mines and the like, no; it is handicapped by impossible conditions. Imperialists are not in the Colonies to further the fortunes of the native bourgeoisie. In East Africa, for instance, where copper and other minerals are found, the rights belong to the South Africa Company, which allows financial interests to work the minerals for an annual royalty of something like £500,000. This is the case in Northern Rhodesia, where, before anything else, this sum is set aside for payment to shareholders outside the Colony; all it gets back is one or two shillings in the pound income tax. As the companies are registered in London, their income tax is due there. Hence the Colony is poor. So you see it is all a vicious circle.

N:—Then how to get out of the vicious circle?

P:—It is one of the greatest problems of our time. I can see no hope of solving it, of improving the condition of the native peasantry and proletariat—in Africa, India, West Indies, and in other Colonies—of civilising them, raising the level of their culture, education and physical situation in general, under the present system. If the progressive sections of the British people realise that there is no forward march for them under the existing system, how much, how very much more is this so in the Colonies! Only a very radical and complete change will better the conditions of the Colonial peoples. I have already said what I firmly believe to be the solution: *full political representation, economic security, the widest social and educational reforms.*

N:—This seems to me the very point of our talks. I would like to hear you expand this "Charter for the Colonies."

P:—A Charter? If you like. Anyway, the application of Clause 3 of the Atlantic Charter. Now, thinking of the Colonies individually, I would suggest the following immediate measures:—

*For the African Territories:*

- (a) Economic, political and social equality, in all Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories. (b) Abolition of forced labour. (c) Abolition of indenture. (d) Abolition of Pass Laws, Colour Bar and all racial disabilities. (e) Freedom of the Press. (f) Freedom of assembly. (g) Freedom of speech. (h) Freedom of movement.\* (i) Drastic limitation of company profits.

\* See Appendix.

*For South Africa*

Removal of all discriminatory laws, especially the obnoxious Pass Laws, which strike at the essential civil liberties of the non-European people. Extension to the Africans of the same economic, political and social rights enjoyed by the European population.

*For West Africa:*

Widening of franchise and extension of municipal government to all townships on a basis of local democracy. Extension of education and social services. Replacement of monopoly-control of West African trade by producers' co-operative organisations working in conjunction with a Legislature elected by the people and responsible to them. Release of the native spokesmen imprisoned for their activities in attempting to ameliorate social conditions.

*For Kenya:*

All land now held by European settlers and not actually cultivated by them to be taken by the Crown for free distribution among the African natives. The same applies to Crown lands.

*For the West Indies:*

In view of the findings of the last Royal Commission it is clear that the problem here is fundamentally economic and social, centring round the need for the redistribution of land and more intensive development of the economic resources of these territories. To convince the people that these reforms were genuinely intended, power should be transferred from the present Crown Colony bureaucracy to the elected representatives of the people, on the following basis: Universal adult suffrage; removal of property qualification for membership of municipal bodies and Legislative Councils; abolition of nominated members to such Councils; people's control of expenditure.

*For India:*

In India machinery exists to make full self-government immediately practicable. There is no evidence that the opposition of the Muslim League to the National Congress is shared by the mass of the Moslems. The evidence of the elections is, indeed, decisively to the contrary. And if we needed further proof, during the troubles of July and August, 1942, not even the Tory Press reported communal riot.

A Provisional Government with a Congress majority should be set up, pledged to respect minority rights; this should be done as soon as possible. No action that has been taken by the British Government, nor any move it may make, short of securing national control of the full machinery of government, will prepare the way for India's complete self-determination. Fundamentally the Indian problem remains one of agrarian reform. If any appeal is to be made by the leading national figures to the millions of illiterate peasants they must have something concrete to offer them, and this they can only do if the direction of affairs is in the hands of their own progressive leaders.

At the beginning of the war I put on paper some of the suggestions I have just made. I said then and I say again now: In a conflict which purports to be one of free peoples against brute force and dictatorship, nearly 500,000,000 British subjects have direct interest, but as yet no incentive to participate wholeheartedly in a life and death struggle. *If the people of India and the Colonies are to be asked to throw their full weight into this conflict they must be given that incentive. For what driving force is there comparable to that which animates free peoples in the struggle to maintain their liberty?* What is wanted, therefore, is a declaration granting to Britain's Colonial subjects all the social and political rights for which the people of Great Britain are fighting.

And so, in the interests alike of Colonial peoples and of victory over Nazism, we ask for the immediate declaration of a policy which is in itself just, and consistent also with the Atlantic Charter. Whenever, before the war, the question

of Colonies and their transfer to some other power arose in the House of Commons, Government and Opposition speakers alike emphasised that no transfer would be considered *without the consent of the people concerned*. We ask, now, simply that this implied right of self-determination be accepted in all its implications.

I would say to the people of Great Britain :—

The advantages of such a policy are incalculable. The relationship between the indigenous populations and the army in India, and the scattered forces in the Colonies at present occupied in policing those regions against revolt and civil disturbance would undergo a complete change. These forces would no longer be regarded as the instruments of alien operations, but rather as friends and allies. A comparison: the Australians have welcomed the American contingents who have reached their shores.

In this changed atmosphere the vast man-power of India could be drawn upon. Industrial and agricultural resources would be exploited in a new burst of energy having behind it the full force of political movements which are to-day operating against England. The world would be electrified by a change of policy which would turn the slogan of "Democracy" into a living reality—into the struggle of free peoples, regardless of race, for their common rights against a menace felt equally by all. Thereby, also, would be nullified the activities of Nazi and Fifth Column agents. Do not forget: Rome abandoned her Colonies to save herself, losing both herself and her Colonies. Yet Britain, by freeing her Colonies, can save both herself and them and lay the foundations of a new Commonwealth of Nations, bound together in equal partnership.

I would say to the Colonial peoples :—

The age of Imperialism must end, but this will only prove true if we can defend our new rights against a new and ruthless enemy: Nazism. It will not serve you to lose a British master to find instead a German or a Japanese one. Freedom is for those who can defend it; and it will take all the force of the Allied powers and your force as well, all your energy and sacrifice, to defeat those who would build *their* empire upon the ruins of the old.

If this great change, this new policy for the Colonies should come, my message to them would be :—

"Let Britain know that you are with her, that you accept and respond, that you will fight to the death against the Nazi and the Japanese peril, that you will keep your word to Britain as long as she keeps hers to you."

London.

1943.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### WEST INDIAN CONSTITUTIONS

N :—Well, Padmore, since the publication of the first edition of *THE WHITE MAN'S DUTY* two years ago, I understand that there have been quite a number of constitutional changes in various parts of the Empire. Can you tell me about these

P :—Yes, a number of changes have been made, both in the West Indies and in Africa. But let us begin with the West Indies, since the movement for constitutional reforms had its beginnings in the Caribbean. As a result of the strikes and labour disturbances which swept over the islands in '37 and '38, Coloured Labour began to demand not only economic and social reforms but also new political concessions.

After considerable haggling, Colonel Oliver Stanley, then head of the Colonial Office, agreed early in 1944 to grant Jamaica an experimental Constitution, based upon universal adult franchise. Under the terms of this new Constitution Jamaica has set up a two-chamber parliament.

1. *The House of Assembly*, consisting of 32 members elected by all natives from the age of 21. This is the first time that a Colony with an overwhelming majority of coloured inhabitants has been granted universal suffrage since Ceylon was endowed with this right about ten years ago.
2. *A Legislative Council*, consisting of 15 members, all of whom are nominated by the Governor. While this Chamber will apparently have power to initiate Bills, the actual function of government will be vested in another body, called the Executive Committee.

This Committee will consist of 10 members, 5 nominated by the Governor and 5 chosen from among the members of the House of Assembly, which corresponds to the British House of Commons. The Executive Committee will be presided over by the Governor, who will have a casting vote, but not an original vote. The Committee will have power to prepare the annual budget and to approve all Government Bills before they are presented to the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council for debate. The Executive Committee will, therefore, be the real organ of power, subject to the Governor's powers of "certification," or veto. During the five years' experimental period of the Constitution the Colonial Office has promised to institute a sort of Cabinet, or department system as obtains in Ceylon, whereby the main departments of the Civil Service will work in close co-operation with corresponding sub-committees formed from among the members of the House of Assembly.

N :—The first elections have already taken place, haven't they? And I understand that Labour won the majority of seats.

P :—That is true, and yet not true, because Bustamante does not really represent Labour. But let me explain the meaning of this paradoxical statement. The new Constitution came into operation on November 20, 1944. It was a red letter day in the history of Jamaica, and to mark the occasion special prayers were offered up in all the churches. The first general election, based on universal suffrage, was held on December 14, 1944, and was contested by three major parties :—

1. *The so-called Labour Party*, under the leadership of the island's most picturesque demagogue, a moneylender named Alexander Bustamante.
2. *The People's National Party*, headed by one of the most brilliant West Indian barristers, Norman Manley, K.C., a former Rhodes Scholar at Oxford.
3. *The Jamaica Democratic Party*, a nondescript organisation of employers—Kingston merchants, shopkeepers, shipping agents, manufacturers and planters, dominated by the Chamber of Commerce and agricultural and landed interests.

Under the spell of Bustamante's oratory and lavish promises to grant all things in heaven and earth to the long-forgotten, downtrodden masses, the workers and peasants have swept him into power. His party secured 22 seats out of the 32 in the House of Assembly, while Manley's party obtained most of the rest.

But considering the political backwardness of the masses, who have never before had a chance to take their part in the political affairs of their country—because this has always been the exclusive privilege of the upper classes—it is really not at all surprising that they supported Bustamante, who established a place for himself as their national "hero" during the labour disturbances of 1938-39.

N :—You speak of Bustamante as though he were not really a progressive. Is that so?

P:—Really, one could hardly call him a Radical, much less a Socialist. But when you take into account the way in which he has come into the lime-light, it is not at all difficult to understand why he secured so many seats. But let me tell you a little bit about Bustamante. He was born in Jamaica and migrated to Cuba several years ago, where he acquired certain experience of labour and trade union matters. He is said to have served in the Spanish Army in Morocco and finally drifted to New York, where, it is alleged, he made some money gambling on the stock exchange. With this capital he returned to Jamaica in the 'thirties and set up in business as a local moneylender.

His opportunity came in 1938, when the dock workers in Kingston and the agricultural labourers on the sugar plantations revolted against their intolerable working conditions. Bustamante, who had been in conflict with the then Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, over the moneylending racket which he operated among the badly-paid native civil servants, took up the cause of the strikers and succeeded in obtaining increased wages and improved conditions for them. The Governor ordered his arrest and imprisonment, an act which made Bustamante a "martyr" in the cause of Labour. By the time he was released Bustamante was everywhere proclaimed the "national hero" of Jamaica.

Exploiting his popularity and hold over the masses, Bustamante organised a number of trade unions, each bearing his name. He elected himself president for life of each of seven unions now operating throughout the island and usurped the right to appoint and dismiss all officers. To-day he is a virtual dictator. Not without reason, he boasted to Sir Walter Citrine, who served on the Moyne Royal Commission, that he had more power in Jamaica than the Governor. Unfortunately, the result of the recent elections lend claim to this boast.

N:—What about the People's National Party which you mentioned a little while ago? I think you said it was led by Norman Manley. What part has he played?

P:—An honest and persevering one. After the workers had won their initial victories in 1939, Manley and other middle-class intellectuals—like Ken Hill who represented Jamaica at the World Trade Union Conference in London—offered their services to Bustamante and the newly-organised Trade Unions. For a time a working agreement was effected, but Bustamante, intoxicated with his newly-acquired power over the masses, took matters into his own hands, expelled all democratic elements from the Unions and set up his one man dictatorship over the organisations. Faced with this split, Manley and other intellectuals gathered round them the more politically advanced workers and formed the People's National Party, based upon a definite Socialist programme and democratically operated. The party has adopted a local "Beveridge Plan," advocating agrarian reforms, industrialisation, slum clearance in the big towns, improved education and medical services, etc.

There is no doubt that Manley is the better man, and the people will learn in time. Bustamante won the first election fight with his demagoguery, but as *The Times* so correctly said in its comment at the time: "His reputation for constructive statesmanship is yet to win, but no one in Jamaica can equal his power over a popular audience. He has shown his capacity as an organiser by building up the trade unions which bear his name, and charges of autocracy have in no way diminished his hold on his followers. A more balanced element in the new House will be provided by the handful of members of the People's National Party, but it has suffered a severe loss in the defeat by a narrow margin of its leader, Mr. N. W. Manley, who has an admirable record of public service and has done more than any Jamaican to educate his fellow-citizens in political realities."

N:—That seems to make the position in Jamaica clear enough, but have there been any elections elsewhere in the West Indies?

P:—Yes, in Barbados, and there the results afford us greater satisfaction. As in Jamaica, the franchise in this island has been changed recently. But first of all, it must be explained that Barbados falls into a special category of Colonial administration. The Constitution, unlike those of most other dependent territories, is based upon a 17th century form of representative government. The local parliament consists of two chambers: (1) the House of Assembly, and (2) the Legislative Council.

Recently the income qualification for exercise of the franchise was reduced from £60 to £20. This reduction has enabled a wider section of the working class to participate in the election of members to the House of Assembly. As a result, the Progressive League, which represents the interests of the Negro masses, secured 15 out of a total of 24 seats in the House of Assembly. The membership of the Legislative Council is hand-picked by the Governor.

Fortunately for Barbados, the standard of literacy is much higher than in Jamaica, and there is more unity among the local politicians. The League, which was opposed by the white planters and merchants, went to the polls on a programme of social reform and progressive working-class legislation, which was endorsed by the overwhelming majority of newly-enfranchised voters. It is the first time since the emancipation of the Negro slaves that representatives of their race form a majority in the House of Assembly, until now dominated by the descendants of former slave-owners and the plantocracy.

N:—What kind of people are leading the Progressive League?

P:—Credit for organising and leading the Progressive League goes chiefly to two Negro barristers, Grantley Adams and Hugh Springer. Both men are Oxford graduates who, like so many of the younger coloured Colonial middle-class, are taking an active interest in the welfare of the under-privileged masses, the section of all Colonial communities which stands most in need of intelligent leadership.

Incidentally, Mr. Springer served as a member of the Commission on Higher Education in the West Indies, which was set up by the Colonial Office to plan the establishment of a West Indian University. He is also the secretary of the Barbados Welfare Association, the first Co-operative organisation in the island.

N:—Now what about Trinidad? I was out there a few years ago, just about the beginning of the war, and I met many of the younger progressive people who were urging for an extension of civic rights and better social and economic conditions all round. I should like so much to know how many of them are now getting on, and what progress they have been able to make in the commendable work they were doing. Please do tell me what things are like now.

P:—I know you will be very pleased when I tell you that universal adult suffrage has been granted to Trinidad. Actually this reform came about as the result of agitation by the local Trade Unions and progressive parties, and was achieved against the violent opposition of the capitalists and plantocracy. Forced to give way to popular demand, especially after a similar measure had been granted to Jamaica by the Imperial Government, the representatives of vested interests serving on the local Franchise Commission recommended to the Governor that the vote should only be extended to those who can understand English. Since the majority of the East Indian immigrants on the sugar plantations of Trinidad don't understand English, such a language test would disqualify them. The planters, who exploit the cheap labour of these Indian workers, are afraid that, should they be given the right to vote, they would bring about a betterment of their conditions by sending representatives to the Legislative and other Councils to look after their working-class interests.

The Trinidad Trade Union Council and the West Indian National Party, both of which are largely under Negro leadership, have taken up the cause of

the East Indian coolies and are demanding that they, too, should enjoy equal rights of citizenship with the natives of African descent.

This is a very significant gesture and indicates the political maturity of the Labour Movement in Trinidad, where the Trade Unions and political parties embrace people of all races—Africans, Indians, Chinese, Portuguese, and mixed-blood elements.

N:—And what is the feeling among the people now about the Constitution in Trinidad?

P:—They are agitating for a new one. As a matter of fact, according to the latest reports, the trade unions and leaders of political organisations in the island have decided to submit to the Colonial Secretary a seven-point memorandum requesting a larger and fully elected Legislature, a partly-elected Executive, and ministries on the Jamaica model. Obviously the people have reacted to the new Jamaica Constitution. The changes being asked for, in that they come from a Colonial territory, are almost revolutionary. The people want a Legislative Council of 30 members to be elected by adult suffrage, its Speaker to be elected by the Legislature from among its members. They call for the distribution of seats on the basis of population, all constituencies to be single-member constituencies. As to the Executive Council, they want it to have eight members under the Chairmanship of the Governor, five of whom should be elected by the Legislature, with three ex-officio members—the Colonial Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Attorney General. They desire the Executive to be at all times the instrument of policy and the Governor to be obligated to act on its advice on all internal affairs; the five elected members should hold office so long as they enjoyed the confidence of the Legislature and to be obligated to resign from the Executive once they had ceased to enjoy that confidence. It is also proposed that Committees of the Legislature shall be set up under the Chairmanship of the elected members of the Executive to deal with specific affairs of State. Now we must wait and see what will happen.

N:—You seem pretty well to have covered the West Indies. Ah, wait a moment, what about Bermuda and the Bahamas?

P:—In Bermuda the vote has been extended to women, and that is all I can say about the island. But there has been quite an upheaval in the Bahamas, where vested interests raised the greatest opposition to any form of Constitutional reform.

N:—Was the resignation of the Duke of Windsor tied up with all that in any way?

P:—There's no doubt about it. From the time he took over the administration of this ancient British Colony, he tried his best to break the economic and political power of the white minority who control the local parliament, known as the House of Assembly. Only about 20 per cent of the inhabitants of the Bahamas are able to exercise the vote, because of the high property qualification. And they have even less hope of ever being elected to the Assembly, since the property qualification for membership is £200. The Duke of Windsor tried hard to get them to accept the secret ballot, all voting at present being open. But this was stubbornly resisted.

N:—I was under the impression that a number of people in this country regard Windsor as a reactionary.

P:—About that I know very little. I can only judge him on his actions as Governor of the Bahamas, and there I can say that he championed the cause of the underdog. I'll tell you a little about him. He came to the islands in 1940, and his troubles really began with what we might call the American "invasion" of the Bahamas, which were included among the bases Mr. Churchill granted to the United States in exchange for 50 over-age destroyers. American army contractors arrived in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, to recruit labour for the construction of bases in the outlying islands. They agreed to

pay the Negro workers American rates, but the local white employers objected on the ground that to give the blacks higher wages than existing rates of pay would affect their labour supply and upset the economy of the islands. Not to offend them, the Americans went back on their original offer and began to trim wages to ruling rates. It was then the trouble broke out.

Suddenly on the 1st June, 1942, while holidaying on his ranch in Canada, the Duke received the news that a general strike and rioting had broken out in Nassau. The acting Governor ordered out troops to suppress the disturbances and several Negroes were killed and wounded. This provocation only added fuel to the fire. The Duke hurried back to the Bahamas.

N:—What did he do?

P:—He broadcast to the people, who were angry and worked up, and promised to put things right. Somehow quiet was restored. And then the Duke resorted to the traditional British technique of appointing a Commission to enquire into the cause of the disturbance and to make recommendations to improve the workers' conditions. The Commission recommended increased wages to meet the rising cost of living occasioned by the war and the influx of Americans. It further recommended that monies deriving from increased taxation and income-tax and death duties levied upon rich European inhabitants should be used by the Government for social reforms in the interests of the Negro population. Old age pension was proposed for those over 75 at two shillings a week! Upon that the European reactionaries, whose power had never before been challenged, got together to fight the Duke tooth and nail; the struggle quickly became one between the more progressive forces spear-headed by the Duke and the local Tories, egged on by Big Business. The latter completely ruled the Legislative Assembly, because of the voting system, and thus, when the Duke introduced the Commission's recommendations for a minimum skilled wage of six shillings a day, combined with a public works programme to relieve unemployment after work on the American bases was completed, and tariff reductions to cheapen imported foodstuffs for the masses, the representatives of Big Business in the Assembly rejected them.

N:—What did the Duke do then?

P:—He understood that to meet the solid phalanx of opposition from European reaction he would have to change his tactics if he wanted to make a dent in their power. Therefore, he introduced a Constitutional Reform Bill asking for a secret ballot to substitute the present system of open voting. Once more the Europeans registered their refusal in no uncertain manner. Finally the Duke declared that he would invoke the special powers vested in him as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony to override the opposition, but he withdrew when the whites threatened to bring about a political crisis. No doubt he remembered what had happened to Governor Sir Murchison Fletcher of Trinidad when he, too, championed the cause of the coloured workers against the white plantocracy and oil barons.

N:—Yes, I remember that case. Sir Murchison was recalled to London.

P:—And retired. The Colonial Office did not support his stand. But to return to the Duke. Last December, he tried again to get the Assembly's approval to the Secret Ballot Bill, but they rejected it again. In desperation, he prorogued the Assembly, appealing to the opposition to reflect upon the matter during the Christmas recess. He warned that if they persisted in opposing his reforms there would be labour disturbances and riotous outbreaks, for which he would hold them responsible. But when the Assembly re-convened in January this year, the opposition remained intractable and threatened to get rid of the Governor if he maintained his championship of the blacks' cause. Being unable to break down the diehard stand of the Europeans on the one hand, and disgusted with the weak-kneed attitude of the Colonial Office authorities,

who showed no intention of backing him up in carrying out his reforms, the Duke offered his resignation to Colonel Stanley. It was accepted readily.

N:—And now what?

P:—Now they have advanced Mr. W. L. Murphy, Colonial Secretary of the Bahamas, to the Governorship.

N:—Do you think he will be able to succeed where the Duke failed?

P:—That is problematical. The Duke is the first Governor who has ever attempted to curb the power of the white overlords of the Bahamas by trying to reform the 250-years-old Constitution granted to British settlers during the reign of Charles II.

N:—Your explanation is most interesting. The territories which are to some extent outside what we might call the main stream of the West Indies seem to be getting the worst possible deal. What about British Guiana? Does it associate itself with British West Indian aspirations?

P:—Most certainly. British Guiana, while on the South American mainland, has always been identified with the political and labour movements of the West Indies. In fact, British Guiana was the pioneer of trade unionism in the Colonies, and the first trade union in these parts was organised by Hubert Critchlow. The Negro and Indian workers in this Colony have been asking for a new Constitution, with wider representation. But the position is less hopeful than in some of the other Colonies. The Franchise Commission in British Guiana, unlike that in Trinidad, opposed by a majority vote the extension of adult suffrage to all sections of the population.

N:—Why was that?

P:—The motive no doubt was that the local planters and other vested interests fear that the Indians, who form the largest ethnic community, would exercise too much political power should the existing property and literacy qualifications be abolished. Consequently the Commission has recommended that the property qualification for voters should be retained, but, as a minor concession to Indians and Negroes, the two largest sections of the population, that the property and income rate should be reduced by half or more. The Franchise Commission has also recommended to the Governor of British Guiana a literacy test in English. This recommendation is being strongly opposed by the people, and it is doubted in official circles in London whether the Colonial Secretary would agree to a literacy test, as it is against the established policy of the Colonial Office in territories inhabited by non-English speaking races, such as Hindus, Chinese, etc.\*

N:—From what you have said, it would seem that the people are astir all over the West Indies.

P:—There can be no doubt about that. Recently in St. George's, Grenada, a conference of West Indian representatives from the Leeward and Windward groups was held to explore the possibility of the federation of the two groups of islands in these seas as a first step towards a complete West Indian Federation.

N:—I am glad to hear this. I think federation is most desirable. It is the only way the islands will be able to solve their problem.

## CHAPTER V

### POLITICAL REFORMS IN AFRICA

N:—In our last conversation we talked about constitutional changes in the West Indies. Now tell me something about Africa. Is there a move for political democracy there?

\* Latest information is that the Indian workers' and peasants' organisations are threatening to march on Georgetown, the capital, to secure enforcement of their demand for adult suffrage.

P:—Yes. The whole Colonial Empire is on the move. Take West Africa, for example. In these Colonies the intellectual and progressive elements who have been closely observing the course of events in the West Indies and elsewhere, have come forward as the spokesmen of their people. You remember the visit of the West African editors to Britain in 1943? Well, these editors, who should know more than most people about the state of things in their countries, formulated a document setting forth demands for new Constitutions in the West African Colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia, based upon adult suffrage.

N:—Now that is very interesting. Of course, I knew about the visit of the editors. I wanted to meet them, but I believe I was out of London at the time. Do tell me more about the document. What happened to it, and what has been the outcome of it?

P:—You see, when they went back to their different territories, they began to popularise through the press and other means the ideas which had been set out in their Memorandum, which they entitled *The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa*. It is a constructive document, having special importance because it outlined a Ten-Year Plan to advance the territories from the present period of tutelage to fully representative and responsible government. It drew tremendous response from the people, with the result that in the Gold Coast a delegation of chiefs and intellectuals presented a draft Constitution to the Governor, recommending modifications in the existing Legislative and Executive Councils.

Considering the modesty of the demands, it is not surprising that the Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed to grant them. In an Order in Council issued from Downing Street last October, Colonel Oliver Stanley announced his approval of a new Constitution for the Gold Coast. Under the new set-up the official majority on the Legislative Council will be transformed into an unofficial majority made up of African chiefs and a sprinkling of elected members, based on a property vote. For the first time, Ashanti and the Northern Territories—two of the hinterland regions of the Gold Coast—will have representation on the Legislative Council. The Governor, however, will retain his reserve powers, which will enable him to veto any decision made by the African majority on the Legislative Council in "the interests of public order, public faith, or good government." In other words, the Colonial Office has conceded the form of political democracy to the Africans but has retained the substance. For, as long as Colonial Governors can override decisions of legislatures, there can be no true expression of the people's will, even where there are unofficial majorities on the Councils.

N:—That is fine. Of course it means that the Africans on the Gold Coast will now be able to legislate in their own interests.

P:—Nothing of the sort. You may remember from what I have told you before that when the British present a gift horse it is always useful to look it in the mouth. And when we examine this particular constitutional gift horse we find that it has no teeth, for the Governor has reserve powers which allow him to override any decision of the Legislature of which he does not approve.

N:—That does make things look rather different from what they appear on the surface. Does this apply to all of the West African territories? What about Nigeria! That is the biggest of the Colonies, isn't it?

P:—Yes. Do you remember the editor Mr. Nnamdi Azikewi, who was responsible for sending the telegram to Mr. Churchill about the relation of the Atlantic Charter to Nigeria?

N:—Oh yes, I do. He does seem to be a very dynamatic man. You have often mentioned him to me and the work he is doing. I suppose he has played quite a leading role in any movement there is just now?

P:—Without a doubt. He was responsible for crystallising public opinion

in Nigeria round the Constitutional demands, and used *The West African Pilot*, the paper of which he is the editor, and the most influential one in the Colony, for the purpose. The outcome of this agitational campaign was that a National Convention was held in the Nigerian capital of Lagos in January this year. Its purpose was to formulate and adopt a programme of economic, political and social reforms. The Convention at the same time set up a National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons with the object of unifying all the progressive organisations in the country within a federation. So far 87 organisations have already affiliated to the Council, among them sixty tribal unions, the two leading political parties—the Nigerian National Democratic Party, and the Union of Young Democrats—eleven social clubs, eight professional associations and, most significant of all, the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, comprising 86 affiliated unions with a membership of over 500,000. This is the first time in the history of an African Colony that such an all-embracing organisation has come into existence.

Now, the Nigerian Government watched this development very closely, and countered the anticipated draft Constitution from the Nigerians by forestalling them with Constitutional proposals of their own set out in the recently published White Paper on the Proposals for the Revision of the Constitution of Nigeria. This is a very subtle means of facing the Nigerians with an accomplished fact. And the Legislative Council have accepted the proposals, thus saddling the people with a retrogressive Constitution which will run for 9 years. The people, however, have repudiated the African members of the Council and are sending a delegation of elected leaders to London to present their feelings to the Colonial Secretary.\*

N:—How is it that the Legislative Council have accepted them if the general run of the Nigerian people think they are against their interests?

P:—You will have no surprise when I explain to you the present composition of the Legislative Council, established by the Constitution which came into operation in 1922. Its membership is limited to 30 official and 29 unofficial members, and it is presided over by the Governor. Four only of the unofficial members are elected (3 for Lagos, 1 for Calabar).

N:—Do you mean to say that there are only four elected members in a country of—how many people?

P:—Twenty-two million. And that on a property franchise of £100 per annum, in a country where the average wage is two shillings a day. Not more than one per cent. of the inhabitants of these two towns have ever been able to qualify as voters. The Governor has the right to appoint 17 Africans to represent areas outside of Lagos and Calabar. These hand-picked Africans hold their seats at the will and pleasure of the Governor. The remaining 7 unofficial members represent European interests vested in banking, shipping, mining, trade and commerce. In this way the big monopoly combines like United Africa Company, the Unilever concern which has a stranglehold on West African economy, has direct representation in the central governing body of the country. Since real power rests in the hands of the Governor and Executive Council, composed of the European departmental heads of the Governor's administration, the Legislative Council is in fact nothing more than a glorified debating club.

N:—Is any of this to be altered under the proposed new Constitution? You said a little while ago that it was retrogressive. How can you say that before the Constitution has been given a chance to work?

P:—Under the proposed Constitution membership of the Legislative Council is to be increased and Regional Councils are to be set up in the three main provinces into which the country is divided—Northern, Western and Eastern.

\* The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons has issued a Memorandum embodying amendments to the Richards Constitution.

The Northern Council will be bi-cameral. One chamber, to be known as the House of Chiefs, will contain sultans, emirs, and other powerful Fulani rulers.

N:—Of course, you explained about these sultans and emirs when we first talked about Nigeria. I remember that you said they have been the main instruments of British power in this part of Africa since Lord Lugard established Indirect Rule at the beginning of the century.

P:—That is their role, and they are kept alive by the British on the pretext that in this way the native institutions are maintained for the well-being of the people. But that is not true. Before the advent of European sovereignty, the authority of the chief derived from the people and elected Councils of Elders. The chief's authority was subject to the will of the people, and when he became autocratic and tyrannical, he was removed by the people. To-day, under the system of Indirect Rule, the chiefs are the minions of the British overlords who, while maintaining the political form of native institutions, have usurped the rights of the people and made the chiefs subject to their control. That is, they have made them the agents of their policy. And they are well rewarded. The chief among them gets £5,000 a year, and they are allowed to keep a certain proportion of the taxes they gather for the maintenance of their courts, and all the rest of it.

N:—That's as much as a British Cabinet Minister gets.

P:—Who probably works a good deal harder, but does not, perhaps, achieve such effective Imperial results. But let me get back to the new Constitutional proposals. I digressed only to sketch the political background without which it is impossible to judge the new proposals. You can see from what I have said that the upper chamber, as we can call the House of Chiefs, will be solidly for the maintenance of things as they are, in their own interests. Now let me come to the second chamber, which will be the House of Assembly. This will have 19 official members, who will be heads of departments, and 20 unofficial members, 14 of them minor chiefs to be selected by Native Authorities (instruments of Indirect Rule), the other 6 to be nominated by the Governor. The Western and Eastern Provinces will have only one chamber, with 14 European and 15 African members for the former, and 13 and 14 respectively in the latter province.

N:—That gives the Africans a majority on these Regional Councils.

P:—Only at a first glance. You see, the president of each House, who in every case will be the Governor's deputy, will have an original and casting vote, which at once cancels out any ostensible unevenness. Apart from that, all African nominees will be the Governor's appointees, either directly or indirectly, and therefore, more or less responsible for supporting his policy. However, these Provincial Chambers are vested with nothing more than advisory privileges. They are not to be responsible for the enactment of legislation, but can only debate measures or motions put forward, and in particular the unofficial members would have no right to propose money resolutions.

N:—Now what will be the functions of these Regional Councils? I suppose they will have definite responsible tasks?

P:—They have to be given some reason for existing. They will be made responsible for the provincial budgets, which are derived mainly from the share of poll, hut, and other direct taxes retained by the Native Authorities. Now these can be increased or decreased at the power of the Governor, but recently he has "frozen" the contribution of the Native Authorities to the central revenue from the direct tax "at the amounts paid in by them during the year 1943-44. The remainder, and the whole of any additional proceeds from any increase in the direct tax, is to be retained by the Native Authorities themselves." Now you can see from this that the chiefs' responsibility is reduced almost completely to that of tax-gatherers, and that, contrary to the expression of the White Paper that it is done in order "to encourage Native Authorities to adopt

progressive policies," it will merely reinforce the chiefs in their present endeavours to extort the largest possible taxation from the population.

N:—But the Regional Councils will have other functions, won't they?

P:—Their chief other function will be to act as electoral colleges from which unofficial African members will be drawn for the central Legislature.

N:—I gather from that that there is a central body besides the Regional Councils?

P:—That is right. The central governing body, the Legislative Council, is to remain, but its unofficial membership increased from 28 to 29, and its official membership decreased from 30 to 20, who will be heads of administrative departments and under the control of the Governor, who will preside. The Civil Service in the territory is not responsible to the Legislature, being appointed either by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, or by the Governor. Of the unofficial members, 4 instead of 7 will represent European vested interests directly, at the Governor's nomination.

N:—What about the elected members?

P:—You expressed surprise a little while ago that there are only four to represent 22 million people. I am sure you will be shocked to hear that the elected members are still to remain at four, and on the same franchise limited by the high property qualification.

N:—There doesn't seem to have been any progress in that regard. I am really rather shocked. But there is at least an unofficial majority, according to what you have said. That, at any rate, is an advance.

P:—Not if you examine the thing critically. Let's see, now. There are to be four elected Africans and four members representing European vested interests, which will leave 21 African nominees. But they will be nominees of the Governor, either directly or indirectly. For instance, the Northern Province will nominate four Moslem autocrats from the House of Chiefs and five from the House of Assembly. The other Assemblies will also nominate from their bodies, which in themselves are to be nominated by the Governor, the nominees to hold office for three years. There will be no elections. That is how the Regional Councils will carry out their functions as electoral bodies.

N:—But why should you assume that the nominees will not put up an independent stand?

P:—Because the whole Constitution is based on the use of the chiefs and the application of Indirect Rule right the way through from top to bottom. They will be given the task of running the provinces under the supervision of the European officials who will sit in the Assemblies. The policy of administration will be formulated by the whites and operated through the native administrations. In other words, you have a dual form of government, what the Whitehall experts call "pluralism." And the chiefs and the nominated members of the Legislature will be more the servants of the Governor than the European officials, because if they are dismissed they cannot find other jobs. The European officials can at least find alternative means of making a living. And the Governor has arbitrary powers of appointment and dismissal under the Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs' Ordinance, the powers of which he has recently widened by extending them to the Protectorate as well as the Colony.

N:—We appear to have treated the Nigerian Constitution in detail. But it seems important for the future, so that I don't think we need regret that. I would like to know something about the other Colonies, though. Has anything as important taken place there?

P:—No, not as yet. I understand, however, that at the present moment there is talk of promulgating a new Constitution for Sierra Leone. The progressive elements there, headed by the Youth League under Wallace Johnson's leadership, are calling for universal adult suffrage and wider elected representa-

tion. At present there are three elected members for the Colony, which has a population of 150,000, and two nominated chiefs representing the Protectorate, comprising a population of 1,700,000. The authorities stand on the view, however, that universal suffrage for Colony and Protectorate would mean dominating the Legislative Council with representatives of the Colony, who are a minority, or with illiterate representatives of the Protectorate, who are the majority. They maintain that this policy would not be in the best interest of the inhabitants of either section. It has yet to be seen what the Government will do.

N:—And what about Gambia?

P:—Gambia is now enjoying the principle of nominated representation, but is demanding elected unofficial members.

N:—So everywhere throughout West Africa the people are waking up and trying hard to assert their new political consciousness?

P:—Not only in West Africa. I would say throughout the whole of Africa. For instance, in Kenya, progressive African opinion has been pressing for African representation in the Council. As you know, Kenya is really a white man's paradise, and conversely, a black man's hell. There the natives are treated hardly any better than in South Africa, which is notorious for its Colour Bar policy. Although the European population numbers only 20,000, they are represented in the Legislative Council by 9 official members and 8 unofficial members, who are elected by them. The 3½ million Africans have been represented by a white man, appointed by the Governor. This state of affairs is deeply resented by the disfranchised Africans. More and more are becoming enlightened, despite the efforts to keep them backward through the Government's policy of negligence, and the hostility of the whites. It is therefore not surprising that they are demanding representation on the Legislative Council. And as a gesture of appeasement, the Governor has appointed an African. This, of course, is miles off democracy. Nevertheless, it is very significant, because all along the Government have maintained that no African is enlightened enough to sit on the Legislative Council. The man they have appointed is Mr. Eliud Wambu Mathu.

N:—Do you know this man?

P:—He was at Balliol, Oxford. Now in Uganda, which has the reputation in official circles of being the quietest, best governed, and most prosperous of the East African countries, things have not been going so smoothly of late. Early in 1945 there were disturbances and riots in Kampala and Entebbe, the capital of Uganda. Reports said that the Governor, Sir Charles Dundas, ordered out police reinforcements and mobilised all able-bodied Europeans as special constables to handle the situation. Things came under control when armoured cars were brought on to the streets. That seemed like bringing a military array to cope with unarmed people. Eight Africans were killed and 15 wounded when the military opened fire.

Apart from economic reasons—the low wages and high cost of living—the Government attributed part of the trouble to political agitation. The progressive natives, especially the Baganda youths, are demanding reform of the Native Administration. The Governor has since banished the Prime Minister of Baganda Province.\* Similar unrest is reported from Nyasaland, where the African Congress, an organisation composed of educated natives, has expressed opposition to the newly created Provincial Councils made up of hand-picked African chiefs and dominated by European officials.

N:—What is the present constitutional position in Nyasaland?

P:—Apart from the so-called Native Administration or Indirect Rule, the colony is governed under Crown Colony system. The Governor is an absolute

\* According to an official report issued by the Governor, hundreds have been arrested, including chiefs, for anti-British activities.

"monarch." He is assisted by an Executive Council, which is purely an advisory body.

N:—How is the Legislative Council composed? Are there any African members?

P:—Africans are completely excluded. In this respect, Kenya is now a step ahead of Nyasaland, although the percentage of literacy is much higher than in Kenya. The council consists of six European officials and four unofficial members to represent the farming and commercial interests of 2,000 whites. The blacks, numbering 1,700,000, are "represented" by a missionary.

N:—I now understand why the young people of Nyasaland associated with the African Congress, are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs.

P:—Africans everywhere have heard about the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, and demand that they, too, be included within the terms of these declarations. No longer is it possible for Imperial statesmen to ignore the aspirations of the Colonial peoples, who have contributed on the fighting and home fronts to the victories of the United Nations over "the forces of evil."

## CHAPTER VI

### I

#### SUBJECT PEOPLES' CHARTER

*Declaration adopted at A Subject Peoples' Conference held in London on June 10, 1945, and endorsed by: The Federation of Indian Associations in Great Britain; the Pan-African Federation of Great Britain; the West African Students' Union; the West Africa Youth League; the Kikuyu Central Association of Kenya, East Africa; the Ceylon Students' Association; the Burma Association; the International African Service Bureau; the Negro Association of Great Britain; the Negro Welfare Centre; the African Progressive Association.*

#### VICTORY—WHAT NEXT?

At this historic moment when the Fascist tyranny in Europe is being decisively and finally broken, the peoples of the world are being confronted with new and urgent problems of peace and reorganisation. Of these problems none is of greater urgency, none presents a more exigent moral challenge to statesmanship, than the future of millions of subject peoples of Asia, Africa and other colonial countries. For them the destruction of Nazism signifies not an end but a beginning. They are profoundly convinced that victory will have no real meaning if it does not lead to their own liberation from the tentacles of imperialist domination.

#### FREEDOM IS INDIVISIBLE

In the words of one of the greatest champions of oppressed humanity, Jawaharlal Nehru, Freedom, like peace, is indivisible. This is no abstract, academic proposition, but the inescapable lesson of history. The catastrophic international tragedies of the past few decades have proved beyond the shadow of equivocation the utter impossibility of co-existence of slavery and freedom. This painful and practical truth has been brought home to the peoples of Europe at the cost of incalculable misery and suffering. For those who had tolerated and even connived at imperialism with its colour bars, segregation and denial of the most elementary human rights; its social degradation and methods of terrorisation of unarmed, helpless populations; its policy of ruthless economic spoliation, racial tyranny and herrenvolk theories—are beginning to learn by experience that these evils know no frontiers. They have seen how Nazi Germany, taking its inspiration from the technique of domination perfected by other imperialist powers of the West, tried to force upon the nations of Europe the same chains of bondage which imperialism had so far reserved for the colonial masses. The European democratic movements, therefore, must realise that the issue of imperialism can no longer be side-stepped.

#### WHAT IS THE COLONIAL PROBLEM?

We affirm that a durable system of world peace and security, and progressive democratic development of Europe and the Americas, as envisaged by the Crimea Conference, require as their prerequisites the liquidation of imperialism in all its manifestations. This is the essence of the colonial problem. It is not, as is contended by subtle apologists of imperialism, a problem of uplift and charity, of protection and

paternalism. It cannot be solved by means of ingenious blueprints for the economic development of colonies or pious invocations to the conscience of mankind to take up the White Man's Burden, by mandates and regional groupings, condominium and international trusteeship. As historical experience has amply demonstrated, behind these tempting labels lurk old forms of bondage and exploitation. The colonial peoples will be satisfied with nothing less than freedom. On this paramount issue of the age they will not compromise or bargain. They are determined to carry on their struggle till the goal is reached. It is, however, in the direct interests of the peoples of the world to offer unqualified material and moral support to the subject peoples in their fight for liberation.

#### HOW IS COLONIAL FREEDOM TO BE ACHIEVED?

The question naturally arises: How is this perspective of colonial freedom to be actualised? We have taken note of the lofty declarations of the statesmen of the United Nations. But it is significant that these eloquent utterances contain no hint on the vital question of the future status of colonial countries, particularly Burma, Ceylon, Indo-China, African and Caribbean territories, while plans are being put in force which would mean their reversion to the *status quo ante*. It is no less significant that these grandiose generalisations are in complete contradiction to what is happening in Subject countries like India, British, French and Belgian colonies, where thousands of patriots are languishing behind prison bars, often without trial, where peasant and working-class organisations are daily victimised and freedom of press is non-existent, where shootings and floggings on the Nazi pattern are the order of the day.

The colonial peoples may, therefore, be forgiven if they discount the exalted phraseology of Allied statesmen. To-day when the world stands at crossroads it is deeds, not words, that count. The colonial peoples have noticed with increasing apprehension that, although their blood, sweat, toil and tears have contributed in no small degree to the edifice of Allied victory, they have been excluded from all international discussions, even where these vitally concern their own future. We declare that this represents a violation not only of the elementary demands of international morality and the aims for which this war is supposed to have been fought, but even of expediency. For it is inconceivable that there can be any stable basis for world reorganisation which ignores the wishes and aspirations of more than half of the human race.

#### OUR DEMANDS

We feel it is our duty to warn the people of the United Nations and their statesmen that the subject peoples will not accept any plans which are made for them without their consent and consultation. It is imperative that the Atlantic Charter should be consistently applied to all colonial peoples, regardless of their race, colour or degree of social development. To this end, and as an earnest of their sincerity, it is essential that the United Nations should immediately set free all political prisoners in the colonies and invite democratically elected representatives of the subject peoples to participate in the Peace Conference on terms of absolute equality with other delegates. We further suggest that at the Peace Conference there should be set up effective machinery in the form of a World Colonial Council. This would consist of representatives, not of imperialist powers, but of colonial countries themselves and it would be entrusted with the following tasks:—

1. To formulate a policy and programme for the unconditional ending of all colonial systems.
2. To supervise the establishment of representative and responsible constitutions based upon universal adult suffrage in the colonies, such constitutions to provide full statutory safeguards for minority rights.
3. To ensure that none of the territories at present under Japanese control (Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, Dutch East Indies, Korea, etc.) are permitted to revert to a dependent colonial status after their liberation and that ex-Italian colonies in Africa are given full right of self-determination.
4. To bring about the immediate abrogation of all racial and discriminatory laws such as at present deprive Negroes in America, Asiatics and Africans in Africa, and subject peoples generally, of full democratic rights of citizenship.

We are convinced that fulfilment of this democratic programme will have far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, by creating conditions favourable to the free development of subject nations, it will give an impetus to world trade and prosperity. On the other, by removing all inter-imperialist rivalries which are the root cause of wars, it will provide solid foundations for the building of a confraternity of free and equal nations, thus ensuring the world peace which all humanity so ardently desires.



## II

## INDIA AND THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

*Manifesto issued by the Federation of Indian Associations in Great Britain to the representatives of the United Nations at the San Francisco Conference, April, 1945.*

## INTRODUCTORY

It must be stated at the very outset that the problem of India can no longer be regarded as the exclusive province of British Imperial policy. It is in the most profound sense a problem of paramount international importance. In the words of Lin Yu Tang, the famous Chinese writer, "The issue of India is more than the issue of India; it is the issue of freedom and what we intend to do with it."

## INDIA IN WAR AND PEACE

Both by history and tradition Indians are a peace-loving people. Their love of peace, however, has never taken the form of appeasement of the aggressor. They have demonstrated their uncompromising opposition to tyranny and reaction again and again during the past three decades. Under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, one of the most democratic organisations in the world to-day, they have always championed the cause of freedom and democracy everywhere. Their attitude towards China, Abyssinia, Spain and Czechoslovakia provides ample proof of it. At the outbreak of the present world conflict they challenged the British Government to declare its attitude to Indian freedom as a token of the sincerity of its claim to wage a struggle for democracy. In spite of the most intense provocation, in spite of ruthless repression to which they were subjected, they declared their willingness to collaborate with the United Nations in fighting against aggression on the basis of a treaty of alliance recognising Indian Independence, even as late as August, 1942. Mr. Gandhi repeated the same offer in ever more concrete terms last year, after his release.

## INDIA UNDER THE BRITISH

However, precisely because they are against aggression, the people of India refuse to tolerate the continuance of British rule in India, which is based on aggression. In the words of the Indian National Congress: "India has been ruined economically, politically, culturally and spiritually by the British rule." While other nations of the world have advanced and progressed, India in bondage has been left in a morass of stagnation and frustration. British policy has been demonstrably calculated to retard and stultify the social, political and economic development of the Indian people. This has been shown more clearly than ever before in the course of the present war. An alien bureaucracy has squandered India's resources in men and material and proved itself utterly incapable of conducting a total war in a manner even remotely consonant with efficiency. We need only point to the debacle in Burma and Malaya and the famine in Bengal as evidence of the complete inefficiency of the existing regime in India to handle the needs of the people in modern war. In a war of machines India has not produced a single tank or aeroplane; and the much boosted industrial expansion of India remains largely a verbal euphemism designed to beguile the international public. In fact, it is the deliberate policy of the British Government to keep India as an agrarian hinterland to suit the needs of British industrialists for raw materials. In social services like education, health, housing and transport, India remains dismally backward. The present economic plight of the Indian people, particularly her peasants and workers, is not only a source of untold misery, but also a danger to world prosperity. By its policies of wanton exploitation the British Government in India is not only preventing India from attaining her full economic and political stature, but also hindering the expansion of the economy of the world at large. Freedom of India, by creating conditions favourable to large-scale development of Indian agriculture and industry, would give an impetus to world trade.

## INDIA IN BONDAGE IS A DANGER TO WORLD PEACE

We take it as axiomatic that so long as one-fifth of the human race is kept subject to imperialist rule any hope of a stable peace in the world must remain largely chimerical. Historically the subjection of India has been one of the major causes of wars during the past 150 years, since it has engendered inter-imperialist rivalries among the world powers. England herself has been involved in more wars during the past century and a half than almost any other nation because of her desire to retain her hold over India.

She has also used India as a base for further aggression in the Middle and Far East as, for instance, in her war against Afghanistan and Burma. To maintain her supremacy over the sea route to India and the Suez Canal she carried out operations against Egypt in 1882, and to this day holds Cyprus, Malta, Aden and the Arabian coast. Her policy of intrigue and aggression in the Mediterranean, Near and Middle Eastern territories is logically dictated by her anxiety to perpetuate her occupation of India. On the other hand, the British occupation of India has been at once an incentive and example to other European nations to pursue policies of aggression against the peoples of Asia and Africa. It is a matter of historical knowledge that the ideology of "drang nach Osten" which has dominated the minds of German imperialists for the past eighty years, and which has precipitated two great world conflagrations, is a German counterpart of the aggressive policies which led to British expansion in Asia and Africa.

It is, therefore, clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that peaceful development of Europe itself as visualised by the Yalta agreement is inconceivable without an immediate ending of imperialist domination of Asia and Africa. This process of liberation must necessarily begin with the restoration of freedom to the Indian people. For the struggle for Indian freedom is the focal point of the struggle for the freedom of all subject peoples. Indeed, it is not merely a question of practical politics but a moral challenge to the statesmen of the world. India to-day stands at the bar of world history not as a suppliant, but as a claimant for her freedom which could not be denied her without making a mockery of all the aims for which the Allies are supposed to be fighting.

## WHY OTHER PEACE-LOVING NATIONS SHOULD SUPPORT INDIA

We insist that the freedom of India is a practical necessity for shortening the war, a political urgency for ensuring the peaceful evolution of the world, and a moral imperative for the restitution of belief in justice in international relations. But it is also more than that. It is an historical inevitability. An awakened people, fully conscious of their destiny, cannot be kept under subjection indefinitely. The bourbons of Whitehall and New Delhi who have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing may think otherwise in their ignorance and obtuseness. But that is not the lesson of history. The people of India are determined to be free. However, it would serve to strengthen the bonds between the peoples of the world if India in her struggle received the willing support of other peace-loving nations, since it would furnish a practical example of international co-operation.

## BRITISH ARGUMENTS

We would take this opportunity of dealing with the outworn arguments which are constantly being put forward by the apologists of British rule in India to justify British domination. These arguments are as disingenuous as they are dishonest. They harp on the theme of Indian disunity, but conceal the fact that the policy of "divide et impera" which the British Government has applied consistently for the last 150 years is largely responsible for such divisions as exist in India. The surprising thing, indeed, is not that there are divisions, but that there obtains in India to-day such an over-measure of unity on the fundamental question of Indian freedom—despite the splitting tactics so assiduously and insidiously employed by the British. Liberals, Congressmen, socialists, industrialists, peasants and workers of every community and denomination whatever differences they may have with each other on domestic issues, are unanimous on one thing—that the British rule in India must end immediately.

Another argument advanced by the opponents of Indian freedom is the alleged incompetence of India to take over the obligations of her own defence. There are two fallacies underlying this argument which must be exposed. Firstly, in so far as India is unprepared for her defence, this is obviously the result of British occupation: it was one of the first acts of the British to disarm the people of India and to render them incapable of defence. No subject nation is ever permitted the means of defending herself; and the weakness of an imperialist power to defend its possessions was amply demonstrated not so long ago in Singapore, Malaya and Burma. Secondly, the argument illustrates an antiquated attitude of 19th century isolationism. If there has been one thing that has emerged from the present war, it is the fact that no nation by itself can stand out against a well organised aggressive power. The only hope of defence in modern war for nations, both great and small, lies in a system of collective security. We, therefore, suggest India is at least as capable of defending herself alone as Britain. We go further: given the opportunity of developing her resources under a free, democratic regime India can build up a mighty defensive force which would be a source of great strength to the future organisation for peace and security.

## INDIA'S PART IN THE PRESENT WAR

In the course of this war cruel toll of suffering and sacrifice has been extracted from India. Many of her sons languish in German and Japanese prison camps. Others lie dead on the battlefields of Burma, Africa and Italy. Her economic life has been recklessly and criminally disorganised by an alien Government which does not enjoy the confidence of her people. Millions of Indians have died of starvation, disease and destitution. Yet her leaders and statesmen, many of whom lie behind prison bars, have at no time been consulted either in the prosecution of the war or post-war discussions. Nominees of British Government have entered on far-reaching commitments on India's behalf both in relation to the internal and external aspects of her future. Even Sir Zafar Ullah Khan, a judge of the Federal Court of India and former member of Viceroy's executive council, speaking at the Commonwealth Relations Conference held at Chatham House, London, declared: "Does it not strike you as irony of the first magnitude that India should have two and a half million men in the field fighting and struggling to preserve the liberties of the nations of the Commonwealth and yet should be a supplicant for her own freedom."

## IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

We, therefore, declare to the peoples and statesmen of the United Nations that India will not accept any obligations and commitments except those which she undertakes through her own chosen representatives. We earnestly urge that the representatives of United Nations who are invited to attend the San Francisco Conference should demand:—

1. Immediate release of Indian political leaders.
2. The formation of a representative National Government.

Only such a Government would possess the necessary democratic sanction to elect responsible representatives to attend the Conference at San Francisco and other international Conferences and enter into honourable commitments on behalf of a free India.

## III

## AFRICA IN THE POST-WAR WORLD

*Manifesto presented to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco, April, 1945. Promulgated and supported by The League of Coloured Peoples, West African Students' Union (London), International African Service Bureau (Manchester), Negro Association (Manchester), Negro Welfare Centre (Liverpool and Manchester), Coloured Men's Institute (East London), United Committee of Coloured and Colonial Peoples (Cardiff), and endorsed by the following Colonial Trade Union Leaders on behalf of their Unions: J. S. Annan, Gold Coast Trade Unions; T. A. Bankole, President, Nigerian Trades Union Congress; H. N. Critchlow, British Guiana Trades Union Council; J. A. Garba-Jahumpa, Secretary, Gambia Trades Union Council; I. T. Wallace Johnson, Secretary, Sierra Leone Trades Union Congress; Jomo Kenyatta, General Secretary, Kikuyu Central Association of Kenya, East Africa.*

The decisions of the historic Crimea Conference represent the consolidation of the alliance of the three Great Powers, Great Britain, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the final phase of the war of liberation against Hitlerite Germany. They demonstrate the unity and singleness of purpose of the anti-Fascist Powers to "destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world." The decisions aim also at the prevention of any future aggression and at the removal of the political, economic and social causes of war with the close and continuing collaboration of all peace-loving peoples.

By their Declaration the leaders of the three Governments have re-affirmed their faith in the principles of the Atlantic Charter, their pledge in the Declaration by the United Nations and their determination to build in co-operation with other peace-loving nations a world order dedicated to a secure and lasting peace which will "afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

The dawn of a new epoch in world relations is thus breaking. Only on the basis of the unity of purpose and of action which had made victory in the war possible for the

United Nations can the highest aspiration of humanity—a secure and lasting peace—be realised.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

The decision regarding the establishment of an International Organisation confirms and consolidates the decisions of the United Nations already reached at Teheran, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, and Hot Springs to provide the framework of future world security and prosperity. The problems of mankind are now recognised as the concern of the entire world.

Over large areas of the world millions of people live in poverty, disease, squalor and ignorance. Their continued low standards of life constitute a serious threat to the standards of people everywhere and represent a powerful challenge to the financial and technological resources of the more advanced nations joined together in collaboration to promote world prosperity and the happiness of mankind.

The vast continent of Africa with its 160 million inhabitants and immense though undeveloped resources in mineral, forest and agricultural wealth must command the attention of the international organisation. The rapid economic development, industrialisation and the advancement of the social standards of Africa must form an integral part of any plan to build world prosperity.

## UNITED NATIONS MUST FREE THEMSELVES OF THE EVILS AGAINST WHICH THEY ARE FIGHTING

Africa is a land of varied political forms, economic interests and social and cultural standards. This is complicated by the fact that among the Powers with imperial possessions in Africa are Fascist Spain and Fascist Portugal. It is further complicated by the colour bar laws and practices obtaining within the territories of some of the United Nations themselves, notably the Union of South Africa. The United Nations are pledged to secure in addition to the military defeat of Fascism, the eradication of its moral and political manifestations, chief of which is the theory of the master race against inferior races. If the principles for which we fight do not apply to Europe, then it is the duty of the United Nations to eliminate the influence of the Spanish and Portuguese Fascist regimes and to remove from their own territories those theories and practices for the destruction of which Africans have died on many battlefields. In this way alone can true international collaboration and planning for the future of Africa proceed in conditions free from conflict and favourable to such collaboration.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the belief that it is the eager desire of the United Nations to begin with the least possible delay the solution of these problems, we recommend:—

(1) That the International Organisation should immediately adopt policies and set up all necessary machinery to secure the uniform and rapid development of the economic, social and cultural life of the African peoples.

(2) That, guided by the principle of equal rights for all men and recognising that the success of any scheme will depend on the measure to which Africans themselves participate, steps should be taken for the provision of maximum opportunity for such participation at all levels of administration.

The present inferior political, economic and social status of the African people militates against the achievement of harmonious co-operation among the peoples of the world. International co-operation demands the abolition of every kind of discrimination on account of colour, race and creed wherever such discrimination exists.

(3) The present system of exploitation by which the bulk of the wealth produced in Africa goes to enrich foreign monopoly firms and individuals must be replaced by systematic planning and development whereby in the first place the Africans themselves shall be the principal beneficiaries of the wealth produced, then an equal opportunity shall be afforded to all nations in the exchange of products. In this regard an international council representative of producer and consumer interests should be established within the framework of the International Organisation for the stabilisation of commodity prices at levels ensuring reasonable returns to producers and maximum satisfaction to consumers.

(4) Simultaneously with economic development progressive steps should be taken to associate Africans with the management of their own affairs with a view toward the achievement of full self-government within a definite time limit, as in the case of the Philippine Commonwealth.

(5) The eradication of mass illiteracy calls for energetic measures no less sustained than those which aim at the ending of poverty, disease and squalor. The greater the

spread of education for both children and adults the greater will be the pace of advancement of the peoples as a whole. That it is possible to eradicate mass illiteracy within a short space of time is proved by the experience of Soviet Central Asia, where 20 years ago there was a very small percentage of literacy, but where now illiteracy has been practically abolished and universities flourish.

(6) In view of the widespread desire among the inhabitants of the ex-Italian colonies of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland to be re-united to Ethiopia, we demand that these peoples be given the right to determine for themselves whether or no they want to rejoin their Ethiopian motherland. Should they desire to remain outside the Ethiopian State, they shall have the same treatment as other African dependencies, and shall be given every assistance in developing along with these dependent territories on the road to full self-determination.

(7) The African peoples by their contributions in manpower and material resources in the war against Fascism; by their services in Ethiopia, East Africa, the Western Desert, Italy and in the Battle of Germany; and by their services in Burma and other theatres of war, have earned the right to benefit as a result of the new concept of international co-operation which has been acquired in the course of the grim ordeal of war against Fascism.

Signed by: T. R. MAKONNEN, Secretary, International African Service Bureau  
 J. E. TAYLOR, President, Negro Welfare Centres  
 E. J. DU PLAN, General Secretary, Negro Welfare Centres  
 PETER MILLIARD, President, The Negro Association  
 T. DOWUONA-HYDE, Secretary, Anglo-Negro Fellowship  
 JOMO KENYATTA, General Secretary, Kikuyu Central Association  
 A. A. MOSSELL  
 J. NURSE  
 A. HASSAN  
 B. RODERICK  
 K. A. CHUNCHIE  
 SAMSON MORRIS  
 R. W. BEOKU-BETTS  
 HAROLD A. MOODY, President, League of Coloured Peoples.

## IV

## SAN FRANCISCO DECLARATION ON COLONIES

*The San Francisco Conference to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" approved the following Colonial Charter*

## DECLARATION REGARDING NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

## Article 73

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognise the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:—

- (a) To ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;
- (b) To develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement;
- (c) To further international peace and security;
- (d) To promote constructive measures of development, to encourage research, and to co-operate with one another and, when and where appropriate, with specialised international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic and scientific purposes set forth in this Article; and

- (e) To transmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes, subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible other than those territories to which Chapters XII and XIII apply.

## INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEESHIP SYSTEM

## Article 75

The United Nations shall establish under its authority an International Trusteeship System for the administration and supervision of such territories as may be placed thereunder by subsequent individual agreements. These territories are hereinafter referred to as Trust Territories.

## Article 76

The basic objectives of the Trusteeship System, in accordance with the purposes of the United Nations laid down in Article 1 of the present Charter, shall be:—

- (a) To further international peace and security;
- (b) To promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement;
- (c) To encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, and to encourage recognition of the interdependence of the peoples of the world; and
- (d) To ensure equal treatment in social, economic and commercial matters for all members of the United Nations and their nationals, and also equal treatment for the latter in the administration of justice, without prejudice to the attainment of the foregoing objectives and subject to the provisions of Article 80.

## Article 77

1. The Trusteeship System shall apply to such territories in the following categories as may be placed thereunder by means of trusteeship agreements:—

- (a) Territories now held under mandate;
- (b) Territories which may be detached from enemy States as a result of the Second World War; and
- (c) Territories voluntarily placed under the system by States responsible for their administration.

2. It will be a matter for subsequent agreement as to which territories in the foregoing categories will be brought under the Trusteeship System and upon what terms.

## Article 78

The Trusteeship System shall not apply to territories which have become members of the United Nations, relationship among which shall be based on respect for the principle of sovereign equality.

## Article 79

The terms of trusteeship for each territory to be placed under the Trusteeship System, including any alteration or amendment, shall be agreed upon by the States directly concerned, including the mandatory power in the case of territories held under mandate by a member of the United Nations, and shall be approved as provided for in Articles 83 and 85

## Article 80

1. Except as may be agreed upon in individual trusteeship agreements, made under Articles 77, 79 and 81, placing each territory under the Trusteeship System, and until such agreements have been concluded, nothing in this Chapter shall be construed in or of itself to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any States or any peoples

or the terms of existing international instruments to which members may respectively be parties.

2. Paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be interpreted as giving grounds for delay or postponement of the negotiation and conclusion of agreements for placing mandated and other territories under the Trusteeship System as provided for in Article 77.

#### Article 81

The trusteeship agreement shall in each case include the terms under which the Trust Territory will be administered and designate the authority which will exercise the administration of the Trust Territory. Such authority, hereinafter called the Administering Authority, may be one or more States or the organisation itself.

#### Article 82

There may be designated, in any trusteeship agreement, a strategic area or areas which may include part or all of the Trust Territory to which the agreement applies, without prejudice to any special agreement or agreements made under Article 43.

#### Article 83

1. All functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas, including the approval of the terms of the trusteeship agreements and of their alteration or amendment shall be exercised by the Security Council.

2. The basic objectives set forth in Article 76 shall be applicable to the people of each strategic area.

3. The Security Council shall, subject to the provisions of the trusteeship agreements and without prejudice to security considerations, avail itself of the assistance of the Trusteeship Council to perform those functions of the United Nations under the Trusteeship System relating to political, economic, social, and educational matters in the strategic areas.

#### Article 84

It shall be the duty of the Administering Authority to ensure that the Trust Territory shall play its part in the maintenance of international peace and security. To this end the Administering Authority may make use of volunteer forces, facilities, and assistance from the Trust Territory in carrying out the obligations towards the Security Council undertaken in this regard by the Administering Authority, as well as for local defence and the maintenance of law and order within the Trust Territory.

#### Article 85

1. The functions of the United Nations with regard to trusteeship agreements for all areas designated as strategic, including the approval of the terms of the trusteeship agreements and of their alteration or amendment, shall be exercised by the General Assembly.

2. The Trusteeship Council, operating under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assist the General Assembly in carrying out these functions.

### THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL COMPOSITION

#### Article 86

1. The Trusteeship Council shall consist of the following members of the United Nations :—

- (a) Those members administering Trust Territories ;
- (b) Such of those members mentioned by name in Article 23 as are not administering Trust Territories ; and
- (c) As many other members elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly as may be necessary to ensure that the total number of members of the Trusteeship Council is equally divided between those members of the United Nations which administer Trust Territories and those which do not.

2. Each member of the Trusteeship Council shall designate one specially qualified person to represent it therein.

### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

#### Article 87

1. The General Assembly and, under its authority, the Trusteeship Council, in carrying out their functions, may :—

- (a) Consider reports submitted by the Administering Authority ;
- (b) Accept petitions and examine them in consultation with the Administering Authority ;
- (c) Provide for periodic visits to the respective Trust Territories at times agreed upon with the Administering Authority ; and
- (d) Take these and other actions in conformity with the terms of the trusteeship agreements.

#### Article 88

1. The Trusteeship Council shall formulate a *questionnaire* on the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of each Trust Territory, and the Administering Authority for each Trust Territory within the competence of the General Assembly shall make an annual report to the General Assembly upon the basis of such a *questionnaire*.

2. The General Assembly may, when it deems necessary, itself exercise any of these functions and powers.

### VOTING

#### Article 89

1. Each member of the Trusteeship Council shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Trusteeship Council shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting

### PROCEDURE

#### Article 90

1. The Trusteeship Council shall adopt its own rules procedure, including the method of selecting its president.

2. The Trusteeship Council shall meet as required in accordance with its rules, which shall include provision for the convening of meetings on the request of a majority of its members.

#### Article 91

The Trusteeship Council shall, when appropriate, avail itself of the assistance of the Economic and Social Council and of the specialised agencies in regard to matters with which they are respectively concerned.

## “On the March”

“MEN AND WOMEN all over the world are on the march, physically, intellectually and spiritually. After centuries of ignorant and dull compliance, hundreds of millions of people in Eastern Europe and Asia have opened the books. They are resolved, as we must be, that there is no more place for imperialism within their own society than in the society of nations. The big house on the hill surrounded by mud huts has lost its awesome charm.

“Men and women in Russia and China and in the Middle East are conscious now of their own potential strength. They are coming to know that many of the decisions about the future of the world lie in their hands. And they intend that these decisions shall leave the peoples of each nation free from foreign domination, free for economic and spiritual growth.”

—WENDELL WILLKIE, *One World*.

### WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN SERVICE BUREAU?

The International African Service Bureau (I.A.S.B.) is a non-party organisation which owes no affiliation or allegiance to any political party, organisation or group in Britain or elsewhere. It fights for the economic, political and social demands of Africans and peoples of African descent. It supports the demand of the Colonial peoples for responsible self-Government “of the people, by the people, for the people.”

#### MEMBERSHIP :

(a) Active membership is open to all Africans and peoples of African descent who accept its aims and objects and abide by its constitution.

(b) Associate membership is open to all non-Africans who sympathise with the programme of the Bureau and desire to demonstrate in a practical way their interest in Africa and the cause of the Colonial peoples.

#### EDUCATING PUBLIC OPINION.

One of the chief functions of the Bureau in Great Britain is to help enlighten British public opinion about conditions in the Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated territories in Africa, the West Indies and other parts of the Empire. In this way the Bureau hopes that the people of the United Kingdom, who are supposed to be the “trustees” of the Colonial peoples, will be in a better position to administer their trust.

The Bureau also seeks the goodwill and support of all democratic and progressive forces in Great Britain in securing democratic reforms and civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, movement and other rights enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, for Africans and other Colonial peoples.

In carrying out this programme, the Bureau will be pleased to supply speakers to Labour Party Branches, Trade Unions, Co-operative Guilds, and other working-class and progressive organisations, in order to explain the present conditions under which the coloured populations in various parts of the Empire live.

*For further information, write to the General Secretary,*

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