

BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index

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JOHN LATTO FARQUHARSON (IAN) BUIST, CB

interviewed by Malcolm McBain on Tuesday 8 April 2008

at 9 West Hill Road, London SW18 1LH

Education and family background

MM: Ian, could we start by your telling us something about your education and your family, and how you came to join the Colonial Office?

IB: Before we begin, I'd like to say that what you will hear is history as I remember it. Memory is notoriously unreliable, and I do find that, as I get older, names and dates, and sometimes events in which I took a part, escape me. So this will not be a professionally composed account, with everything cross-checked and source-quoted. But I hope I will be able to give you and others the feel of what so much of it was like, seen often from the inside.

But getting back to family, my father was an Army doctor. He and my mother both came from Dundee. My grandfather Buist was a brilliant mathematician, physician and obstetrician, but he subscribed to every rebel cause that he could. He was an early socialist, an atheist, a vegetarian, a eugenicist, and a promoter of Dundee's now heavily-used crematorium. My father, I think, reacted against this a bit and was more orthodox. He had the family talent for minute detail, not least when making things with his hands, and was full of kind and quiet wit. My mother's father, however, was a well-known chartered accountant, and auditor to the great Alliance Trust and its fellows, which embodied the very active talents of Dundee's investors, especially in enterprises in the USA. My mother inherited many of these gifts; she was, I think the first woman president of the Students Representative Council at St. Andrews, and got J.M. Barrie elected as Lord Rector, for which he gave a remarkable address on "Courage". Today, I think, she would have been a businesswoman in her own right; but in those days it was a matter of bringing up a family of four. I am the second of the four children. I was lucky enough to win a scholarship to Winchester from my small prep school near Edinburgh during the War, so I spent five years there, 1943 to 1948, and went on subsequently to New College, Oxford, with a closed scholarship.

The advantage of that was that you knew what the competition was; the disadvantage was that there were about three times as many exam papers to do! I was at New College from 1948 to 1952 and I read Classics, Greats – effectively Ancient History, Philosophy and Greek and Latin literature, which I found very useful in later life. Philosophy (especially linguistics) sharpened my insight into all reasoning; without history, we have no perspective on the problems of our age; the Greek and Roman worlds comprised a complete picture of a different – but not so different – civilisation.

I was then faced with the question of what to do. I was fortunate enough to get a congratulatory First and I thought, “Well, should I go in for the academic role?” And I applied for a job at Glasgow University in the Department of Humanities; however, after I got there, and had more or less been dragooned into accepting it, I thought on the train coming back that that was not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, and I decided then and there that I wanted to see the real world. So I went in for the Civil Service Exam. That would be in 1952.

I was again very fortunate. There were two methods for entry, as you probably remember. One was Method A, which was a kind of test of your general civility, urbanity, ability to get on socially with everybody, and included three compulsory papers. The other was Method B, which involved a far wider range of optional written papers plus the other three compulsory ones. That’s the method I chose; I knew I’d never survive the house party test. I was fortunate enough to come top of the list, so I got my choice of department. People said to me, “Oh! You must go to the Treasury. That’s where everything happens. That’s what’s so important.” I said, “No, I want to go to the Colonial Office,” because I thought that, throughout history, people should be judged according to the way in which they carried out their responsibilities for others. It seemed to me that this was exactly the function of the Colonial Office, and, besides, I was an enthusiast for Joseph Conrad. So everything pointed in that direction, and I was given my choice.

Recruitment to the Colonial Office as an Assistant Principal, 1952

I joined the Colonial Office on 17 November 1952, after a rather long wait.

MM: Did you not have to do National Service?

IB: Yes, I did have to do National Service. I was called up at eighteen in 1948. They tested my sight beforehand and I went down from Winchester to the outskirts of Southampton to the address given me, and tapped on the door. A very old specialist came to the door, who worked for the Ministry of Labour. His lenses were about three inches thick, and he declared me to be fit for service. But the Army never accepted any of those tests automatically, so when I was in they retested me, and decided that my eyesight was too poor. So I was thrown out after two weeks' basic training, which, however, was very interesting, and I got the minimum of ten days' leave; plus, panic stations, how to obtain a place at New College at the very last moment.

I was lucky because, because of the huge bulge of returning ex-servicemen after the War, they had built a large number of prefabs within the College, and there were only two places left, and I got the last one. The other one went to somebody who had been thrown out because he had a hammer toe or something like that.

So I had a touch of National Service, but not the real thing. The saved time was quite valuable because, of course, the Greats course lasts four years instead of the usual three for a degree.

MM: Very good. Thank you. So you joined the Colonial Office as an Assistant Principal in 1952 and what did you do there?

IB: Before speaking about that I would like to say a bit about the Office as I found it.

Life in the Office

There was an extraordinary mix of formal manners and informal camaraderie. Playing safe, on Day 1 I addressed everyone as "Sir" till my Review Clerk kindly drew me aside and explained that this wasn't necessary. There was a great sense of a vital common purpose. You knew that those at the top would look after you and make active plans for your career - no need, as in these worse times, to have to apply

for vacancies. There were social organisations like the C.O. Sports Club, the Chess Club and the C.O. Choir in which all rank was set aside. In this last I regularly found myself sharing the bass line with Sir Hilton Poynton, no.2 in the hierarchy, as we grappled with *Acis and Galatea* or *The Revenge*. At the Coronation our choir and the Treasury Singers, under Robert Armstrong, together performed William Harris's *Praise the Lord* in Westminster Hall.

One duty that regularly came round was that of Resident Clerk, which meant spending all "off" hours for a week ensconced in the tiny rooms at the top of Church House, and dealing with any emergencies. People would bring files up before they went home, with an indication of possible problems and whom to contact if they arose. Quite often this meant waking the Secretary of State. Telegraph and security staff were also on duty 24 hours a day. It fell to me once to be in post during the week before we were going to declare an Emergency in British Guyana and to remove its Prime Minister, Cheddi Jagan, and his communist wife Janet. We could not do this till the necessary "gunboat" had arrived to quell any possible disturbances. The Press had got wind of naval movements and constantly rang me and my colleagues at the Ministry of Defence and the C.R.O. We had to sustain the accurate but irrelevant story that Navy manoeuvres were being held elsewhere in the Caribbean. In any lull, we rang each other to confirm that there was no change in the official line.

The Resident Clerk's rooms consisted of a bedroom, bathroom and office and a small kitchen half way down the corridor. Inevitably the phone rang when one was in the kitchen or the bath. I finally persuaded the Office to put an extension in the bathroom, thus avoiding pneumonia from having to rush soaking wet next door for an inevitably long conversation.

Perhaps the most alarming feature of this duty was the large red book containing our instructions. Page 1 started "What To Do On The Death Of The Sovereign", which as I recall was to send out emergency cables to every post and make sure that the flag was flown at half-mast. All very sensible, since *someone* has to be on duty at such a time, but disconcerting to a neophyte.

All such organisations host legendary characters. Our own Africa Under-Secretary, Bill Gorell-Barnes, would warble down the corridor in a pleasing tenor when things were going well. There was Juxon Barton, in Defence Department, who had once been a Provincial Commissioner in my area in Kenya before 1914. He would cover minute sheets by the score in his inimitable sloping hand. One such, which I've not yet been able to track down in Kew, described how to find the grave of John Julius Reitz, the 19-year old lieutenant left in Fort Jesus by Captain Owen in 1824 to symbolise British protection of the Mazrui Arabs, then in revolt against the Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar. Owen granted this protectorate in exchange for the Mazruis' agreement to co-operate in suppressing slavery. Poor Reitz did not survive long, but gave his name to Mombasa's main harbour. When his ship reached Mauritius the British government in Bombay decided it did not want to get involved, or to upset its relations with Oman, and withdrew the Protectorate in 1826. I tried to follow what I recalled of Juxon's instructions, but never found the place (near the old Portuguese Cathedral) when I was myself in Mombasa.

Other characters included Freda Gwilliam, the formidable champion of girls' education, and Sir Christopher Cox, who headed the Education Advisers. He once summoned me to his bedroom in his Nairobi hotel to pour forth a torrent of briefing, while struggling to get his rather podgy form into a tight-fitting dinner-jacket, explaining that he had to go directly from a Government House dinner to the airport, to arrive in time for a special function at New College the following day.

There were celebrated files, with which I was not directly involved. One related to the Treaty of Versailles and the promised return under Article 246(2)(f) thereof of the skull of Sultan Mkwawa to the Wa-Hehe tribe. This skull passed over our desks on its journey home, and I later visited its shrine in Tanganyika, but time is too short to recount the full tale now; I have made a separate note about it. Another reputedly contained formal despatches between the Office and the Governor of St. Helena, with annexed instructions from Sir Solly Zuckerman, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, on how to establish the age of Thomas, its oldest living tortoise. The reply - equally formal - regretted that the tortoise had refused to co-operate in this exercise. The Seychelles also had a rather poor reputation, fulfilling the law that the smaller the territory, the more trouble it would cause. In my day the islands were primarily a

repository for deposed leaders like Archbishop Makarios, but in one short epoch thereafter the Governor was drowned, the Chief Justice impeached, the Attorney-General suspended, and the Archdeacon declared a prohibited immigrant ...

In a fairly remote corner of the Office there dwelt the Commercial Treaties Branch, headed by Colonel Darby. His special function for us in Africa Division was not the GATT, but the Congo Basin Treaties, which had been agreed upon by the Powers in the 1880s, partly to prevent the exploitation of the native populations, and partly to prevent trade discrimination. One major provision was that no spirituous liquors could be sold or given to Africans between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer. The East African territories were all within this zone, but Capricorn cut right across the middle of Northern Rhodesia. Moreover, in agreeing to this provision the French had secured the right to sell their wine, as well as beer, in their own colonial zone, whereas we had to stick to beer. Colonel Darby was asked whether the Treaties could be amended. He replied that that was impossible, as several of the original signatories had now disappeared from the map. (Interestingly, some have now re-appeared, for instance Serbia.) His recommended policy was therefore one of “quiet disregard”. So far as I know, this contravention of the Treaties was never challenged by any other party. However, the non-discriminatory customs tariff regime stuck, no doubt helped by the watchful eye of GATT.

East African Department of the Colonial Office

IB: Anyway, I was assigned to the East African Department and given the job at the bottom of the tree in terms of policy for the two countries of Kenya and Uganda, both of which were extremely interesting. It was only three or four weeks since the Emergency (because of Mau Mau) had been declared in Kenya, and Jomo Kenyatta had been arrested. I was assigned to the Kenya and Uganda desk for two years, during which all sorts of fascinating problems arose. We had, for instance, the Coronation to cope with – that was the first event. There were problems because the Kabaka of Buganda was not allowed to ride to the Abbey in the procession, while the Sultan of Zanzibar did. Shortly after that I was sent out as Secretary to a Commission investigating the Kenya Police. (I think this contributed to my later membership of Amnesty International!) Subsequently I was heavily involved in the deposition and

deportation of the Kabaka of Buganda. Buganda was the main Province of Uganda. It was one of four Provinces and the largest of the four Kingdoms which we recognised within that Protectorate.

MM: What was the problem with the Kabaka?

IB: The trouble there was sparked off by an extremely ill-advised remark by Oliver Lyttelton to the East African Dinner Association, which revived in the minds of those listening the idea that there might be a closer union between the three East African countries, and, even worse possibly, with the three in Central Africa for which a Federation was being mooted at the time. I could practically quote that remark word for word, “Nor should we exclude from our minds the possibility, as time goes on, of still greater measures of union ... etc.” You get the gist. This caused absolute turmoil in East Africa. Uganda had always been afraid of domination by the white settlers. Of course in Kenya the Emergency was still going on and it wasn't very satisfactory in Tanganyika either. The Kabaka was at the same time getting worried about a series of reforms, to which he had agreed with his Parliament, the Lukiiko, which had been put forward and pressed heavily by the energetic Sir Andrew Cohen, who was the Governor – previously the Under-Secretary in charge of African policy in the Colonial Office. These cemented Buganda firmly into the national parliamentary system for the whole of the Ugandan Protectorate. The Kabaka demanded, or at least the Lukiiko demanded, and he would not go back on that, three things: first of all, the complete retraction of any promise or the threat that there would be an East African Federation, to which they would be subject; secondly, he wanted Buganda, not Uganda, to be dealt with by the Foreign Office and not the Colonial Office; thirdly, he wanted us to assure the Buganda Parliament that there would be a time-table for their own self-government in the eventual future, date unspecified.

Well of course the first of these problems was easy to deal with. The other two grew very intractable. The Kabaka would not stand down or withdraw his refusal to comply with the wishes of the colonial Power, which we thought he was bound to do under the Agreement on the Protectorate. And so eventually it got to the point where Andrew Cohen recommended to the Secretary of State that he should be deported and

deposed, and he was indeed put on a plane and sent to London. My Principal, Bill Bates, was away at a game conference in Kivu at the time, so I was left to do most of the legwork, writing White Papers and all that sort of thing, and an immense amount of Parliamentary work, of course. Bill came back and was then available to help deal with the actual deportation. When the Kabaka came to London, he behaved with great dignity. The Parliamentary side of the problem was squared because those MPs who mistakenly believed that he was demanding independence for Uganda soon realised that it was something else that he wanted. What he wanted was independence for Buganda, his own Kingdom, and still, of course, a feudal state. Bill and I worked up a very effective speech to explain this, and Oliver Lyttelton had a most unexpected Parliamentary triumph.

There was eventually a challenge in the Uganda High Court which dragged on for some time, and by the time that Alan Lennox-Boyd, who was Lyttelton's successor, had taken over from him – he'd previously been the Minister of State – a judgement came through that, although the Government had been right to declare that the Kabaka had been disloyal, and had acted contrary to the Uganda Agreement, they were wrong to withdraw recognition, since the Agreement actually said that, if "the Kabaka, Chiefs and people" of Buganda were disloyal, then consequences would follow. There was no proof that the chiefs and people had been disloyal, only the Kabaka. So eventually, after considerable negotiations, the Kabaka was allowed to go back to Uganda and resume his throne. This was well after the time when I was dealing with that particular problem. The condition of his return was that the original reforms went through and various other changes were made. For one thing, the Lukiiko had to withdraw their objection to Buganda Members being elected directly to the Legislative Council of the Ugandan Protectorate.

MM: Could you just say what the Lukiiko was?

IB: The Great Lukiiko was the Parliament - is still, I suppose, the Parliament, since it might have been revived by Museveni - of the Kingdom of Buganda. That is the place to which the explorers Speke and Grant went when they tracked down the source of the Nile; Burton never made it there.

MM: Buganda is really the most important component of Uganda?

IB: Yes, and it contains both the obvious capital, the commercial one and so forth, Kampala, and the legislative capital, Entebbe, about twenty miles to the south on the Lake shore. Government House, now State House, is down in Entebbe, but everything else basically happens up the road in Kampala. So you could not eviscerate Uganda by detaching Buganda and then try to make sense of the rest of it. Also, the three minor Kingdoms, Toro, Bunyoro and Ankole, I think would have felt compelled to follow the same line of action. Their Rulers gave the Kabaka only lukewarm support because they felt that he was on the wrong track and they did not actually want to take it.

MM: So that really was an extremely important incident in your early career in the Colonial Office.

IB: Yes. I had been to Uganda for a few days at the end of our enquiry into the Kenya Police. We did that for about four to five weeks in August/September in 1953, and I was allowed to stay on and make an initial visit to Uganda. When I was there I was obviously not told what was going on, because it wasn't suitable for the ears of somebody junior on detachment. All I heard was that things generally were not going well with the Kabaka. When I got back to London, I discovered why. I had visited things like the Owen Falls dam and met some officials and saw a little of the countryside, and of course you got a good comparison between it and Kenya.

MM: What were the main differences?

IB: Well, Uganda was definitely what I would call an African country. You drove through very lush plantations, small jungly-looking farms with coffee and bananas and so forth, all side by side, not clearly distinguished. It obviously was, and is, a place which could for instance feed a large and growing population. That plus the nature of the towns you would go through. There were many Asians in those days before Amin threw them out. Asians owned the two big sugar factories for instance. But Andrew Cohen had done an enormous amount, both on the economic side and socially, to bring forward the country. I think to this day people in Uganda desire

education. Last time I visited it, at the end of 2000, I could see in the outskirts of Kampala that practically every spare building proclaimed itself to be a school. They all wanted education. Interestingly, when on the same trip when I was in Kenya, most such buildings seemed to be churches, proclaiming their own version of Christianity. Therefore, one suspected that that was where the money was in each case.

The Kenya Police Commission was very interesting. I went out there with its two members. They were the Receiver at New Scotland Yard, S J Baker, the chief civilian in charge of the Met – he ran all the establishment services, accounting, recruitment, terms of service and stuff like that, as opposed to the Commissioner, - and the Inspector-General of Colonial Police, Angus Muller, an extremely nice man with whom I'd had dealings before. You may not remember that the Colonial Office had a vast array of Advisers in every conceivable subject right through from agriculture down to the weather. The lawyers, of course, were supreme. There were only two economists for the entire Colonial Empire, but they were competent people. Muller and Baker made a good team, and I went along as Secretary, which gave me my introduction to Kenya. The Commission's job was to overhaul the structure, organisation, conditions of service and so on, and to take everyone's views on board. We flew around and took evidence everywhere. One issue I knew beforehand was that the Kenya Police in those days were set up on racial lines. That is to say that in the Inspectorate, which is where you would expect people of similar competences to be, the grades ran from "Chief Inspector (European)" down to "Assistant Inspector (European)" and below that was "Chief Inspector (Asian)" and so on down to the "Assistant Inspector (Asian)", and only then came "Chief Inspector (African)". This was ridiculous, and I was absolutely determined that we would abolish this straightaway. There was no question but that we would do it, but *how* to do it and integrate people without loss of status and feeling was quite important. It went through very smoothly in the event.

MM: How did you, as a Colonial Office official, succeed in changing something that was within the remit of the Kenya Government?

IB: Well of course the Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, who was a wonderful person whom I admired very greatly – I always thought he was a great Governor – and the

Colonial Office were at one in wanting to see the end of this system. I think it had dragged on. There was a separate Commission going on in relation to East African salaries, run by Sir David Lidbury. So when we recommended increases to Police pay it had to be within the framework the Lidbury Commission were going to recommend. There was never any question, though, about the policy of either the Colonial Office or the Kenya Government. At that stage, it was entirely run by officials. The non-officials, elected Europeans and Asians and nominated Africans, formed effectively the opposition. So we were appointed by and reporting to not the Colonial Office but the Kenya Government. Inevitably we recommended the same sort of system for the Kenya Police as prevailed in the Met, so we introduced a Civil Secretary to run things which we didn't think were specifically Police matters. All this was very important because the Emergency was on. The Police had been stretched to the absolute limit by having to do essential tasks, so that they had had no time in which to alter their organisation structure to meet social change. It was all brilliant improvisation by a very unusual Commissioner, Michael O'Rorke, who looked like a down at heel jockey, with unfashionably long hair, but was an extremely shrewd policeman.

MM: Kenya was of course a Colony, so the Kenya Government was acting in the interests of the Colony as it conceived the Colony to be formed, mainly by and for white settlers.

IB: No, I don't think that's correct. The Governors of Kenya came effectively under the instruction of the Colonial Office. For instance, it is not generally realised that every single piece of legislation in a colonial territory could be disallowed by the Secretary of State. You'd pass an Ordinance (an Act) and, even if you were practically independent, the legislation could in theory be disallowed. Of course, politically you can't do that. But I did come across one occasion, quite interestingly, in Southern Rhodesia, which was a self-governing Colony. Back in the 1920s the British Government had disallowed a law called the Master and Servants Ordinance, because it was just so outrageous. I think that must have caused a fantastic furore at the time because the Colony of Southern Rhodesia had been taken over from the British South Africa Company basically on the understanding that it was treated as self-governing, and the British wouldn't interfere. This is what has led, of course, to the present disaster. The Dominions Office (later the CRO) treated its settler

government as virtually independent and let problems grow which, had it been under the Colonial Office, we would certainly have tried to tackle.

MM: In that case ...

IB: In that case the power was exercised and I don't know what the political consequence was. In the case of other colonial territories, there was a lot of consultation before any piece of legislation between, for instance, the specialist Advisers and their opposite numbers. Anything really controversial would be brought back to London and discussed well before it got into the local Legislature. Then, if something went through the Legislature, which we had comments on, the Colonial Office invariably sent a dispatch saying that "the power of disallowance would not be exercised in this case, *but ...*" And then followed a string of things in paragraphs two, three and four. "It would be better if ..." "It would be advisable to ..." And of course the Governor and his officials would take the chance either to accept those points if they thought they were right and to legislate for them later on, or at any rate they were taken into account. In addition to this, one of the great motors of colonial policy after the War was the creation of policy and legislative proposals by not only the Advisers, the Social Development Adviser for instance, or the Prisons Adviser of the Colonial Office, but back-up panels of all the great and good from all over British society: things like the Inter-University Council. I have a list of them somewhere here actually because I printed it out for a different purpose. So it was not unusual for a Model Ordinance to be drawn up, for instance for the registration of trade unions, and this would then be sent round by the Colonial Office to every single Governor or High Commissioner saying, "Look, we expect you to take this into account and to legislate accordingly if you can." It was pressure; it wasn't direct instruction but it became policy.

MM: "If you can."

IB: Yes, "If you can," I suppose, but I don't recall – although I dealt with only two countries really – I don't recall protests coming back. They might say, "We'll get around to this later, but we recognise the principles." I think we were beginning to realise that time was very short; not nearly as short as it actually was in the end, but

everybody felt that it was a great enterprise upon which we were now embarked. For instance, in Kenya in 1950, there were only sixteen Africans who passed School Certificate that year, so there was no 'educated society' with whom there could be effective interaction. This only began when scholarships were provided and people came to Britain, like Charles Njonjo who was later the Attorney General of Kenya, to study Law or whatever it was. And great pressure for Government secondary schools built up, taking over the work from the missions, and we spent an enormous amount of money on it in the 1950s and 60s.

It was Colonial Office policy to eradicate racial discrimination, and a step which Governor Baring took was to order all Civil Servants, and their spouses, to resign from any social club that operated a colour bar. This meant in practice that those large clubs, like the Nairobi Club which had a lot of Civil Service members, had to change their rules, and small ones in each district, like the Kitui Club, had to follow suit. I heard that there was a lot of private grumbling, especially from the wives, but it went through smoothly despite that.

It was hard in the 1950s to meet and make friends with Africans personally, partly because of the huge variation in educational and social conditions. My oldest African friend, Samuel Gichara, and I met through a Christian group led by a Dutchman we both knew. Sam is really bright, but he was studying a South African correspondence course in English by the light of a hurricane lamp in a single shared room in Pumwani slum. Later he got a job with Standard Vacuum, joined and became President of the Oil Workers' Union, was taken into management and ended up as General Manager of a Metal Box factory. I was privileged to be "chief Best Man" at his wedding in December 1962, and his oldest son bears my name. In a way, this parallels the whole development of the country in the later colonial years.

Sam is also a Kikuyu, and I found this people extremely subtle, intelligent and interesting. I can speak only a few words of their language but these include some extremely useful proverbs.

I should mention that successive Colonial Development and Welfare schemes were enacted with Treasury money to pay for all kinds of social and economic

development, and much Colonial Office time was spent on them. The first such Colonial Development and Welfare scheme was launched in the darkest days of the War in 1942, by Oliver Stanley who was then Colonial Secretary.

MM: So where did Kenyatta come from?

IB: After the First World War there were the beginnings of political movement among the Kikuyu. The Kikuyu had benefited from being up in the Highlands, being centrally placed, and therefore they were rather favourite targets for the missionary societies, particularly my own Presbyterian group and the Anglicans, because they were healthy places with concentrated population. Although resistant at first, as people always are, when they started to look round and see the benefits of education, some of them changed their minds very quickly. That led to a reaction among others who said, "Look, our culture is being destroyed, and we do not agree in particular with the missionaries wanting to get us to abandon one or two special things which we regard as being important." One was female genital mutilation, which they thought essential to Kikuyu society, and another was polygamy. Those were the two issues over which huge battles were fought in the 1920s and 30s; although even in the 1920s, when it came to the political future of the country, the missionary societies, among whom was a Scot, Dr Arthur, in particular, were accepted as the champions of African rights. It was largely missionary pressure that got the British Government to declare in 1923-24 that "the interests of the African population would be paramount." The subtlety of that declaration was that it was actually backed by Lord Delamere and other white settlers because they saw it as a means of preventing a large influx of Asians from the Indian sub-continent, and the formation of a common electoral roll that would turn Kenya into a country like Fiji or Mauritius. But during the 1920s there was this enormous political ferment: the India Office wanted to 'reward' its peoples for their sacrifices during the Great War, while the Colonial Office resisted.

African political action began at the same time, with the formation of the Kikuyu Central Association. Kenyatta was one of its moving spirits. His original name was Johnston Kamau. He was sent in 1930 or so to London to be the KCA representative and present petitions and so on to Parliament. He stayed for many years here. He married a British lady and worked on a farm for a while.

After the Second World War, there was a similar ferment, particularly from soldiers coming home who had fought and brought back new ideas.

MM: African soldiers?

IB: Oh yes. In the First War they were not really allowed to fight; they were the carriers and there are still suburbs in Nairobi and elsewhere called Kariakoo – the Carrier Corps! After both Wars “soldier settler” schemes for Europeans were set up, and they were given tracts of land for practically nothing. At the same time, the successes of development, which we see even more clearly now, meant an increase in the local population as death rates fell and survival rates increased, and the medical efforts, mostly of the missionaries, succeeded. By far the largest part of the Highlands had been acquired for white settlement from the Masai under two Treaties of 1904 and 1911. But there were already, in the 1920s, considerable disputes over land between individual European settlers who thought they’d been given a Crown Lease, and the Kikuyu, particularly round Nairobi where the Kikuyu were living. The Kikuyu said that their land had been taken away from them. All sorts of aggravations arose because a large chunk of the land which became the White Highlands was pretty well unoccupied when the settlers arrived, owing to the smallpox disaster of the 1890s and the tribal conflict between the Masai, the Kamba and the Kikuyu over areas which bordered each others’ territory. Around Nairobi and around the southernmost, particularly, of the three Kikuyu districts there were a lot of problems. So there were successive attempts to adjudicate to solve these problems. It was only in 1939 that the Government decided to set the whole thing in stone after a final round of compensation, and also to prevent the risk of any African land being alienated by unwary people allegedly selling it to somebody to whom they had no right to sell.

That year saw, therefore, the creation of two Orders in Council: the Highlands Order in Council and the Native Lands Trust Order. These set the boundaries, apart from in the towns where anybody could own property. Effectively no Europeans or non-Africans were allowed to buy and settle in trust land, and vice versa.

MM: So compensation was paid to the Kikuyu?

IB: There was a whole series of judgements made before the Highlands Order in Council was brought into effect. Some bits of land were given back and some bits were added and it was believed by the then Governor that this was as fair a deal as you could get. But of course there are also people who don't believe that, and still today, as you might have seen in the recent controversy in *The Guardian* to which I contributed, there are people who think that their best land was stolen from them. As the population grew, of course, this question became more intense for three reasons. The first is that, with subsistence agriculture, polygamy makes quite a lot of sense. A man marries two or three wives, they have children; each cultivates a separate patch of what used to be virgin or forest land and, when that man dies, because his wives don't own anything, the land is then partitioned among the sons. The daughters of course become the responsibility of the men they marry; that's the way it works in that society, or used to. That is fine so long as there is virgin land to occupy. Originally, the farmer worked the land for two or three years; the land became exhausted and the farmer moved on to let it recover. But when the population increases to the point that people can't move, then you have to subdivide the land, the subdivision being equal between the sons so that everybody got an increasingly small share of every piece of land; huge pressures build up in society. Those pressures led to a considerable number of complaints and cases in the Native Courts about whose land is whose.

MM: I see. Those disputes were adjudicated in Native Courts.

IB: Within the Trust Lands, those were judged by the Native Courts. They could then come up to the District Officer or District Commissioner and he had to supervise them as I recall. But you had to deal with them according to customary laws. There was no tenure of the type in English law anyway.

MM: Why? Because the land could not be demarcated?

IB: Well, because forms of tenure like leaseholds for X years or certainly outright freehold were simply not known. Even to-day, in some countries in Africa where there are Chiefs, they have the theoretical right to redistribute your land if you die and

allot it to somebody else, which doesn't exactly encourage you to make a permanent investment for your children. I believe that's the situation in the Communal Areas in Zimbabwe for instance.

Land tenure reform was one of the major things in which I was involved later on, but you were asking about Kenyatta. After the ferment stopped over political change at the end of the 1920s, there wasn't going to be an East African Federation and so on - there was a movement among Kikuyu who didn't accept modern ways that they must have their own schools and their own churches. The Kikuyu Independent Schools and Churches sprang up all over Kikuyuland, in competition with the missionaries, and what they taught there tended not to be all that favourable to anything that the Government wanted or other people thought. Certainly, if you read the history of Mau Mau, that is where most of the ideas came forward which subsequently fuelled the rebellion.

It cannot be denied that there was a passion for education of some kind, that wasn't being fulfilled by the Government and missionaries. Kenyatta himself, after he returned in 1946, took over what was intended to be the central fount for this educational system, the teachers' training college at Githunguri. It was from there, it is believed, that the whole of the Mau Mau doctrines were distributed. Kenyatta also became president of the multi-tribal, but Kikuyu- dominated, Kenya African Union; the old KCA had been banned.

MM: I'm slightly puzzled by the fact that, while there were only sixteen Africans who passed School Certificate in 1950, Kenyatta nevertheless emerged as a highly articulate and able leader.

IB: You don't need an education to speak, to speak very well, to be an orator, to have a very profound knowledge of your own proverbs and history. One of the troubles that the Government faced when they realised that violence was beginning to spread was that Kenyatta appeared to be condemning violence; he was always being asked to do so after he came back, and he would do so, but in a way which those who could understand Kikuyu felt was not unequivocal, so that on the one hand he might

be saying something but on the other hand there might be a reference to some story or a proverb which took it the other way.

Basically the Mau Mau movement intended to start a political movement. I'm sure Kenyatta at least had wider political aims in mind, particularly of course to redress the position of Africans as against Europeans, many of whom were insufferable in their behaviour towards Africans and never treated them with politeness or anything like that at all. But the first task Mau Mau had, and they never succeeded in this, was to unify the whole Kikuyu tribe behind them. The reason they did not succeed over that was two fold. First, there were now quite a large number of people who had a stake in the status quo. Some people, Senior Chiefs or whoever they might be, saw their future and their loyalties being with the Government. There were also those who were, even within Kikuyuland, much poorer than others, who were working for other Kikuyu farmers without any right to land at all; they were called "Ahoi". They were natural supporters of KCA and Mau Mau. But the people for whom they were working didn't feel like that, so you were beginning to get, not exactly a middle class, but people who were on top and people who weren't, and that was very common in southern Kikuyuland, in Kiambu.

The other element which frustrated them was the Christian Revival Movement. They had a kind of Billy Graham type revival, very widespread in about 1946-47, and it was extremely strong. Those people resisted anything which they thought interfered with or was contrary to their faith, and many were martyred for it. They were known as the 'saved', the "Ahonoki". They were targets for the Mau Mau initially, and they hardly got beyond this, among the Kikuyu. The Emergency was kicked off effectively after a number of violent incidents of killings, the worst of which was the murder of Senior Chief Waruhiu. It was believed that one of his rivals, Senior Chief Koinange, was behind this. They were both Senior Chiefs but their families were not related.

After that, the Government could wait no longer. The settlers kept pressing for action to suppress this violence as soon as possible, but the Governor and the Attorney General, John Whyatt, refused to take action until they felt that the situation just could stand no more strain. Whyatt was particularly anathema to settlers because he said,

“Look, it’s a question of how many stones make a heap.” They didn’t like that, but it was legally correct. In the Colonial Office, we had to defend a declaration of emergency, not under the European Convention of Human Rights, because I don’t think that applied at that stage there, but under the ILO Conventions, which were very important. Everything the Kenya Government did had to be defended under those Conventions, and the declaration of a State of Emergency was one of those.

MM: So it was hugely complicated situation.

IB: It was. And then of course, to begin with, Kenyatta and the others believed to be leaders were arrested in “Operation Jock Scott” and the Army was called in. It took quite a long time before the whole thing was crushed. Initially the soldiers of the Lancashire Regiment came over, and I think the Commanding Officer had no idea at all how to deal with the situation. Later on the Devons and other units were substituted for them, and when it proved possible to lure the Mau Mau gangs, and they felt confident enough, into open countryside to do battle, they lost heavily. That, plus the decision to follow what we’d done in Malaya and create protected villages, surrounded and defended by “loyalist” Kikuyu Home Guard, meant that they had much less access to terrorising the population and to sources of food and support. Eventually they retreated to the forest and after that it was a matter of painfully and with difficulty winking them out. But Kikuyu opinion really turned against Mau Mau after a gang massacred an entire village at Lari in March 1953.

Even after the so-called Commander-in-Chief, Dedan Kimathi, was captured and dealt with, there were still remnants in the forests, who didn’t emerge until Kenyatta became the Chief Minister. In fact, they caused trouble then and Kenyatta sent the troops in and dealt with them. He said, “We’ve got what we were asking for; we’re on the way to independence, it’s going to be achieved shortly; we’re not having you terrorising ordinary people any longer.”

MM: What year was that?

IB: That would be 1963. After Kenyatta was arrested, along with six or seven other people, one of whom was a Luo, Richard Achieng Oneko, and one a Kamba,

came their trial and then their imprisonment way up in the north of Kenya. They were kept there until – I can't remember exactly, but at least until Iain Macleod became Colonial Secretary, so that would be about 1960-61.

One of the problems, or the backdrops, to all African societies are the divisions by tribe, just as they are by caste and tribe in parts of Asia. I was at one stage a District Officer in Kitui, a district about a hundred miles away from Nairobi.

MM: This was when you were seconded to the Kenya Government.

IB: Yes, I'm sorry; I've rather leapt ahead because I think, in terms of time, the first two years were the two years that I was an Assistant Principal in London and, at that stage, I'd made this initial visit out to Kenya and Uganda, which had these various problems to deal with, but made life extremely fascinating.

Parliament: our accountability

About a year after my induction I went on a training course for APs from across Whitehall. I learnt quite a bit about the sewerage system and the technical drawing office of Croydon Borough Council; but when it came to our being instructed in Parliamentary Questions – PQs – I had to say that we had fielded 32 of these in my department only the previous week. Drawing up proposed answers to PQs, with a suitable set of replies to possible supplementaries, was an essential art. You got some days' notice from the Private Office, and replies to Written Questions could be delayed beyond their due date. The real skill was required for Oral Questions, and here I soon learnt some basic rules:

First, always answer the Question *exactly* as it had been put. If an MP drafted this sloppily, and you thought he or she really wanted a different answer, ignore that.

Second, never include anything else in the proposed Reply.

Third, in preparing for possible Supplementaries, always think what would be the most awkward to answer, and then those the MP was most likely to put, given his or

her known track record, and then prepare the best possible replies to both those sets of questions.

Fourth, if the Question genuinely required material that you had to get from the Governor concerned, and this could not be given in time, it was acceptable to promise a later Answer for publication in Hansard.

In my time no self-respecting civil servant would have put up a reply saying that “the information could only be supplied at disproportionate cost” – an Answer which I have seen far too frequently in these worse times. It is not for civil servants, or even the Minister, to judge what is “disproportionate” and what not.

Apart from run-of-the-mill PQs, there would sometimes be a Ministerial Statement or a debate – as, for instance, over the deportation of the Kabaka. Debates on your subject invariably required your attendance in the “official box”, the small enclosure on the government side to the right of the Speaker’s Chair. This was no place for those with long legs, like me, but it had to be endured. Four or five civil servants would crowd in, the cast changing as and when the business item changed. Your task there was to note points and questions raised during the debate, and to waggle a pencil frantically to attract the attention of the Minister’s Parliamentary Private Secretary, sitting immediately behind him or her. The PPS would then come over and you would give him or her legible notes with proposed answers to the points raised. The Minister could then make use of these to reply to the debate. I remember that on one occasion our Minister, Neil Marten, stepped forward to reply to the debate, and incontinently dropped *all* the notes we had given him on the floor, out of his reach. He could then only deal with the points raised by saying that they were most interesting, and he would write to the hon. Member in reply. Everyone could see what had happened, but Neil Marten was much liked in the House, and nobody sought to take advantage of the situation.

It was the job of the Private Secretary to make sure that Hansard correctly recorded what the Minister said – or sometimes, what he or she *should have* said, or *meant* to say - checking this against the scripted text from which his Lord and Master had spoken.

Follow-up to PQs was rigorously pursued. The principle that Parliament came first was always very carefully honoured.

At the end of the two years, I was then sent out to Kenya for two years, and this was the usual practice; the Assistant Principals were sent out to get their feet wet. The normal thing was that the first year they would work in the Central Secretariat, or whatever it was called, and the second year they would go out into the field and be effectively District Officers. I was seconded to the Kenya Government, and this was the system, the idea being to give all the juniors two years' experience of what it was like to work at the other end. There was a parallel system for bringing back some Colonial Service Officers as "beach combers" to London, but there were far more of them, of course, so there were fewer slots.

I must admit that I was delighted to be going back to Kenya. Like many people, I had fallen instantly in love with its countryside. The smell of the red earth after rain; the lemony scent of the flowering coffee; the extraordinarily clear, sharp light in which every leaf stood out; the clouds sailing over great plains like a flotilla, their shadows stretching to the horizon; those mysterious distant hills, challenging you to explore.

My favourite excursion was up and along the Ngong Hills, just south of Nairobi. I once saw two lion below me on the next "tump." Then there was always the National Park, only four miles from central Nairobi, best visited in the late afternoon as everything began to wake up. I once got stuck there when my half-shaft broke as we climbed Mokoyeti Gorge. Fortunately an RAF plane saw the SOS signals from my angled headlights, and radioed back for a Parks rescue party. Neither I nor my guest – who was due to fly to Suez next morning – fancied an eight mile hike in the dark to the nearest Park entrance.

Anyway, I knew that I would be there for two years and I expected that half the time would be in the central Ministries. By this stage, Oliver Lyttelton, the Secretary of State, was bringing in his first new Constitution, which included non-officials. This was a really important step, because it broke forever the possibility that there could be a whites-only government. The cry went forth from the settler groups that they

wanted a non-racial government, but it was in fact a multi-racial government. You can see echoes of these kinds of debate still going on around us to-day. It ended up that three European representatives were made Ministers. Two Asian representatives – one a Muslim, one a Hindu – were made Ministers, and one African Minister. And then there were Assistant Ministers: one African there as well, and an Arab. Although the portfolios were very unequal in weight, this distribution of office meant that they all had the first taste of government. The rest of the Administration was taken up by people like the Chief Secretary and other officials, and by the Minister for Finance, E A Vasey, who was an extremely clever and remarkable person altogether. He had been Mayor of Nairobi but was very unpopular with the Europeans, who thought that he was too left wing. So we then had a mixed Government, but at the start I was assigned to the Ministry for Commerce and Industry in my first year and this was run by an official.

I had a mixed bag of responsibilities. Many of the services which I dealt with, all the transport ones, were actually run on an East African basis; East African Railways, East African Airways which was a separate company, and so forth. In practice, although I had civil aviation under my wing, that really meant the aerodromes, the airports and anything that was on the ground; the moment a plane took off into the air, it became the responsibility of the Director of Civil Aviation, who was an East African appointment. So the two bodies were separate. I should explain that all these East African services were grouped together, not in a federation, but an organisation called the East Africa High Commission, whose Chairman was the Governor of Kenya; the Governors of Uganda and Tanganyika were the other members. This served to keep them going at least until we got towards Independence for first countries. I had a considerable hand in what happened to it after that, as I'll explain later.

Aviation matters were my main concern, and included Search and Rescue procedures and the maintenance of all airfields around the country. I went round many of these with the Aerodromes Engineer and the DCA Deputy, to check that District Officers were spending the money as intended, and not on squash courts or something. Some of these strips were indeed too poor to land on. At the other extreme, we were building the new Nairobi Airport, using a huge force of mainly prison labour. It was

like building the Pyramids – twenty men holding a hose up across the runway. Originally we had used machines, but they could not excavate the “black cotton soil” which pitted the whole area – it had to go because it compressed when wet. So manual work was the only way.

On Search and Rescue, there was the dramatic loss of an East African Airways Dakota, which plunged into Mawenzi, the second peak of Kilimanjaro. The pilot had reported its position as far to the west, so it took several days to find out the truth – guessed at from the start by Captain Caspareuthus, our most experienced pilot. The DDCA, Tommy Thomson, an elder in my church, led the enquiry party up the mountain, and held a service there for the dead, who included the General Manager’s wife.

Caspareuthus had been a pilot in the old Imperial Airways, and had once broken the record for the flight from London to Johannesburg. He told us that when he arrived he was walking proudly down the street, surrounded by news placards proclaiming “Caspareuthus is here!” – only to be deflated by a passer-by asking her friend: “what is that? Is it a new kind of disease?”

Otherwise, I had tourism, of which there was not very much, and I had transport licensing which was a very interesting subject about which I knew nothing before.

MM: That was buses? Or lorries?

IB: Well, they had a system which I’m sure had derived from the British one and probably the ration system during the War, which was that you had A, B and C licences. Practically nobody had an A licence, which would entitle you to carry absolutely everything everywhere. B were goods vehicles and C were private cars and so forth. It was the B licences that really mattered because, as I experienced later, the Railways really played a dominant role over virtually everybody who was capable of travelling on any of the roads. They invariably objected to any major transport company which was applying to transport goods, for instance, from Mombasa to Nairobi alongside their railway. It would take away their goods traffic. The Transport Licensing Board was initially run by railway people. My Minister, Arthur

Hope-Jones, decided that this was not good enough in the spirit of new economic freedom, which was certainly coming in, and he substituted somebody who had been a Shell Oil man to be the Chairman of the Transport Licensing Board, and then we saw a very big change.

MM: In favour of roads.

IB: In favour of roads of course. This played out very interestingly when I was in Kitui which I will explain later.

So these were fairly humdrum functions that I had. To give you a flavour of the other things the Ministry did, I was the Assistant Secretary No. 3. Assistant Secretary No. 2, Gavin Henderson, dealt with industrial licensing. You had to have licences, because of the scarcities of the post-War world, to start any industry at all, but this also had an East African dimension. Jimmy Martin, the First Assistant Secretary, dealt with trade policy issues. This was our part of the Secretariat or the Ministry, as it had now become.

Social Life in Nairobi

MM: What sort of social life was there in Nairobi during the Emergency?

IB: Well, it was obviously constrained by that, but also because the heavy investments we were making in African secondary and University education had not yet matured. The change between 1956 and 1966 was just astonishing. In practice in the 1950s we were confined to fellow-Europeans, and traditional attitudes to race were very strong; Governor Baring's steps to ban the colour bar among Government families were only a first step. On the other hand there were many characters around, from very diverse backgrounds, some of whom had come because of the Emergency.

I was lucky to be staying first at the YMCA, which was always full, and to have friends from my visit with the Police Commission. One was Lewis Mitchell, a taciturn Scot and absolutely rock-reliable police officer. He looked after Nairobi Division and was an elder at my church. He and his wife Evelyn invited me to their

home at Limuru, where Evelyn's father, a British Israelite by conviction, had been the first settler to try tea instead of coffee as a crop there (the land was over 7,000ft.). A contrast was Michael Levien, who had left being Commissioner O'Rorke's personal assistant, and was a fund of tales. One of the more unusual houses in the Muthaiga area of Nairobi, for instance, is the "Trianon", modelled on the Versailles original by Jean-Pierre Pichot. I never met Pichot, but Levien told me he had come to Kenya to look after an elderly settler, who had left him his coffee estate when he died. Jean-Pierre had no interest in coffee planting, and sold out at the top of the market for some £40,000. With this he built the Trianon, which now houses the Belgian Ambassador; but he had quickly blown the rest on an extravagant life style, and was now said to be in Bujumbura, Rwanda-Urundi, where he could not be pursued for his debts.

I also knew a settler family in Elburgon, "Black Tom" Henfrey and his Dutch wife Triene - they had met when Tom was fighting the Japanese in the East Indies, and kindly asked me to stay with them for Christmas. Tom's farm was not so large, but he showed me with pride how the future use of every corner was planned for a decade ahead. He was brother to good friends of my parents back in England. I even had a cousin up near Thika, running a coffee plantation along with 2 million pineapples; his younger brother moved to Kenya from Tanganyika by the 1960s and took up a similar job. He and his wife are among my dearest friends.

The minister at my church was David Steel's father, and I remember the fuss when he attacked the Government in a sermon for the way it was running the detention camps. There was strong pressure from outraged settlers to have Dr. Steel deported as a prohibited immigrant, but Governor Baring absolutely refused to give way to them.

David Steel was particularly concerned about events because the Church of Scotland missions had all been planted in Kikuyuland, and so virtually his African members and their families were Kikuyu, and they fed their worries back to their Presbyterian leaders. There was not the same concern among those like the Seventh Day Adventists or the African Inland Mission whose flocks were respectively Luo and Kamba. The Anglicans had missions in Kikuyuland, but also over in North Nyanza, and I seem to recall that they gave Steel some backing. (It may be worth adding that to prevent inter-church tensions the Administration usually operated a "three mile"

rule – no church or school of any denomination to be allowed within three miles of one belonging to a rival denomination.)

One of my friends, Robin Minney, and I decided to start a Classical Association. We persuaded the “East African Standard” to accept an advertisement in Latin, announcing its formation. There is some legend about the awful fate which befell a paper once when it put in an ad. in a language it did not understand, so we had a lot of persuading to do. Next week, when practically nobody had responded, we wrote a published letter proclaiming its success and this gathered in a useful core of members. We gave papers once a month, and it was all very civilised. In the 1960s we attracted extra support from the Diplomatic Corps, and had people from the Indian High Commission and the Dutch Embassy at our meetings. Apart from this there was Scottish country dancing, and music, including in choirs, which has always been one of my own chief delights.

My posting to Commerce and Industry lasted for about my statutory first year, and then it was obvious that I was expected to go to a District. But I wasn't sent because the establishment of the Lyttelton Constitution required the creation of a Cabinet Office, and it was arranged between London and the Governor that they would have an extremely high-powered Cabinet Secretary, George Mallaby, to start that. Mallaby's Deputy was Frank Corfield. Then Mallaby went off back to London at the end of his secondment and Corfield became the Secretary to the Cabinet and he needed a Deputy. So I was whisked in for six months or more to be Deputy Secretary to the multi-racial Cabinet. My special function was to help prepare replies to the twenty-one chapters of recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Land and Population in East Africa. This had been started on the initiative of the previous Governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, and his colleagues a bit before I joined the Office, and had finally ground out all its proposals. It was a very interesting document because, although nobody would read it now, it went straight for what you might call liberalisation in all areas, including land, which of course hit a nerve. It immediately alarmed the settlers as you can imagine. But the Commission included two distinguished economists, and they had a respected African Chief from Tanganyika, David Makwaia, who died just the other day – I saw his obituary in the paper – and it was headed by a former Governor of Bengal, named Dow.

All the three Governments were required to respond to this, so I had to help the Cabinet to prepare the answers. We had sub-groups of Ministers dealing with each chapter. They would discuss everything in the recommendation and I would put them together and make sure that they were all articulate and coherent. Once that was done, I was released. Then I was sent to Kitui as a District Officer, without any training, without any language and without having been in a court of law except the Privy Council Judicial Committee, which I had attended in order to hear the rejection of Jomo Kenyatta's appeal, as I happened to be in London at the time. It was the only court of law I'd ever been in.

So I had these five months as a DO. There was an argument that it wasn't long enough. It turned out to be indispensable because it gave me the chance to make monumental errors, but also to learn an enormous amount about how people actually live in different societies. There was a temporary District Commissioner and a temporary District Officer (2) along with me, and then there were a couple of Administrative Assistants. We were part of the District Team: the agriculturist, the vet, the people who ran the forestry, the school headmaster, the District Education Officer and all that kind of thing. They were all at this centre and worked well together. It was a very good place to be actually. Although I had hankered after a wilder, more remote area, I was very happy in Kitui.

MM: Whereabouts is Kitui?

IB: Kitui is a hundred miles north-east of Nairobi. There are two Kamba Districts: Machakos, the main one adjoining the main Nairobi-Mombasa road abutting Masailand, and Kitui, which is beyond that, and which occupies a space up to the Tana river.

MM: It's fairly desert-like.

IB: No not really. It was arid mostly, so water was a preoccupation, and on the eastern side were what they called the Crown lands, which were mostly unoccupied, and elephant and other animals roamed about in there. It was typically semi-arid

country; bush country, with quite lush grass at times. Most of the trees were acacia thorn, and outcrops of interesting rock, not as dramatic as those you find for instance in Zimbabwe or even in northern Tanzania. But it was quite an interesting country, a place that was just beginning to get itself settled down. There was enormous concern over Mau Mau. There were one or two people whose political beliefs appeared to be the same as the Mau Mau people's and the local Kamba certainly agreed with the African nationalist movement, which was beginning to be mainstream, but there was really no problem in our part of the woods at all.

MM: What would be the sort of problems that you would deal with?

IB: Nobody of course would trust me with running any part of the District itself, which was quite right. Among the jobs I took on was supervision of the running of the Township. I also used to accompany the District Commissioner on safaris to see how he operated and all that kind of thing. I was a Third Class Magistrate, as I say without training. I had 'Stone's Justices' Manual' which wasn't much good, and Archbold's 'Criminal Evidence and Pleading' which was essential. Most of the Kenyan Penal Code was based on the Indian Penal Code; not entirely satisfactory but that's how it was – and there was the benefit that no lawyers were allowed to operate in my court! The prosecutions were done by an excellent Luo Police Inspector, Erastus Oloo. The police had their offices down the road, and were a mixed bag - some of them had been brought in because of the Emergency, and were not very good, but there were excellent people there. There was a wonderful Irishman whom I greatly respected, Jimmy Dobbs. The District Commissioner was John Balfour (I think he'd been an estate agent before, but he made a good stab at this work). I learned a lot from him.

We had an excellent Community Development Officer, himself a Mkamba. I met him again on a return trip to Kitui in 2000, when my friend Sam took me to see all the huge changes. He had risen to be a Minister, but he was now retired. "Community Development" was then a very new idea, regarded with scepticism by many in the Administration. Like so much else, it was being promoted by the Colonial Office. In essence it revolves around the idea that groups at the bottom should be helped to determine their own priorities for change, rather than having them imposed from

above. Otherwise, apart from Inspector Erastus, our small community was European – including two Italian engineers – and most of us were professionals, like Sid Meadows and Austin Sayers, respectively the district agriculturist and vet.

And then there was an enormous amount, I found, of paperwork that had been totally neglected in the District, and I set myself to sort it out. For instance, although you couldn't alienate land to somebody else, the Government could set aside land for public purposes like roads, markets, schools. Ever so many things were purported to have been done here, and I looked at the files and they had never been carried through to completion. You were required to publish the decisions with maps in the Kenya Gazette and this and that. There was a huge amount of tidying up to do. So I concentrated on getting that straight as well.

Now the point about the township was that hardly any Kamba people lived there. The township was a trading post, basically, that had been on one of the caravan routes from the Coast, and the traders were Arabs, Swahili, one or two Somalis, and members of different Asian communities: one or two Hindus, a Bohra Muslim who had run a cotton mill, but it wasn't working at that stage. Then there was a very new kid on the block called Janmohamed, an Ismaili Muslim who had opened a supermarket and really set the competition back on its heels. In my predecessor's time, the whole of the township had been rebuilt. The citizens had all been given plots with requirements to build to a certain standard and a certain uniformity, and it looked really quite new and sparkling. There was one place where there was no building. I looked down there and wasn't at all surprised. There was a huge great hole in the ground and it looked to me impossible to construct anything on it. Whoever had had that particular plot had obviously drawn the short straw. It was a bit like the hotels in Nairobi. When I'd been in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, there were people growing maize in City Square. Some of them were employees of the Railway who had of course been the foundation of Nairobi, and they had little houses there with plots. There was also one extremely large hole in the ground owned by Mr Bashir, intended for a hotel site. Mr Bashir hadn't done anything about the hotel, and one of the issues I had to deal with in Nairobi was whether the lease should be forfeited for not having fulfilled the conditions. I thought myself that he was extremely sensible. Who would put a hotel up in the middle of an

Emergency? I did try to get support for a possible hotel grading scheme (2-star, 3-star etc). I thought that might be interesting and useful for tourism in due course.

However, going back to Kitui. The township had a headman, what they called a “Mjumbe”, or chief, who was a Swahili, a portentous and venerable character responsible for running the township. There were things to be reported every day, and small things to do all the time. Kitui as a whole was run by a District Council, which the District Commissioner usually attended, and representatives came in from the seventeen or eighteen locations. Periodically they had a District Development Committee to decide on what projects should have priority for development. These included, for instance, sub-surface dams in the many sand rivers (concrete barriers between suitable rocks, allowing the water to rise to or above the sand surface), and a large controlled grazing scheme between the Athi and Tiva rivers where cattle were only allowed in on payment of fees.

MM: Were the District Councils appointed or elected?

IB: I’m not sure how the members of the Council were chosen. The chiefs themselves were appointed by the Government. There were one or two extremely powerful ones, but they were only in certain locations. They were not heritable posts, unlike West African chiefs or chiefs like the Kabaka of Buganda. The Kabaka appointed his own chiefs, by the way, all the way down the line in Buganda. But the Government appointed the chiefs in Kenya.

I can recall two incidents which were rather interesting. First, the water supply was insufficient, which was not surprising in a place like Kitui. So I went to see the Italian engineer who was under contract to look after the three boreholes. I had found that people were having to stay up all night to get water, with no water coming through at all until about 3a.m. The reason for this was that the daily capacity of the three boreholes turned out to be 34,000 gallons and consumption was running at 33,600. The result was a kind of paradox, because the people who were wealthier or had most status, like ourselves for instance – the District Commissioner – were the people who had the houses with the breezes, at the top of the hill. So the people at the bottom, who were less well off, got their water before we did. Anyway, it was plain

that something had to be done about that, so I went to the DC and suggested that we might take advantage of the new three year development plan. I got leave to go into Nairobi to draw on all my contacts there. I went to see the Aerodromes Engineer, who was an old mate of mine. He said he was sorry but there was nothing in the three year plan for the Kitui water supply. I said we had to have something done. "Oh!" he said. "I think I'll squeeze it in under 'minor works'!" So, just about the time I left they surveyed dam sites and found a very good site on the Kalundu River which became the new water source. But I think it's now not used any longer, probably because the population has grown too large. Nevertheless, that was quite fascinating because you saw some of the problems at first hand.

Then I had a number of interesting cases. Basically a Third Class Magistrate could hear admissions – let me explain. Unlike England, we did not permit the police to take confessions unless there was a Senior Superintendent or Superintendent, which is a Provincial or higher official, or a Magistrate present. I think this was a very wise and useful precaution. The person who wanted, or was persuaded, to make a statement would be taken to me, effectively, or one of the other Magistrates, and then I would ask them, "Are you were sure you really want to make a statement and, if so, what is it?" The police would not be present. Then the court translator would make an interpretation and write it down and so forth. That, I think, safeguarded the integrity of the judicial system quite considerably.

MM: You said just a moment or two ago that somebody or other was a Swahili. Did you mean a Swahili speaker?

IB: No, I meant he was a Swahili from the coast. 'Swahili' comes from the Arabic for 'coast'. Kiswahili is the language of the Swahili people. They have different groups - the "nine tribes" and then the "twelve tribes"; I won't go into the divisions of all those for you. Those are the ones for whom "a Swahili" is really the appropriate term.

Anyway, apart from taking admissions and then, of course, giving evidence as to those, which I had to do later, and pick out the person who had made the statement in the court, sometimes quite difficult because the court was the District Commissioner's

court, I had to do what used to be called Quarter Sessions in English law, that is to say Preliminary Inquiries (PI) into really serious cases. They were all killings. I had five, I think, during my five months. This was extremely difficult for everybody because I didn't speak Swahili and I didn't speak Kamba, and most of the people there who were brought before the court or who had anything to say had to speak in Kamba, and the court translators normally translated from Kamba into Swahili. In my case, they couldn't do that because I wasn't going to understand. There was one man whom I always had to pre-empt who did the translation straight into English, so I used him.

Now because there were no lawyers there, there was usually nobody doing the defending. You had the prosecuting policeman, Inspector Erastus, and he proceeded very well – he was very well trained and I thought the Police Commission had done a good job as far as Inspector Erastus was concerned. I had effectively to become a kind of French Magistrate and make inquiry myself, and ask questions which tended to tilt the other way, to try to make sure that the balance of the questioning was fair. And I kept on telling the accused that they really did not need to say anything if they did not want to. They invariably wanted to say something, which didn't always do them any good.

The first case I had I should really have dismissed straight away. I had the power to say “this case should go no further.” There had been a quarrel around a fire and a young lad had picked up a stick and thrown it at his father because he was angry at what the father had said. The father had an abnormally thin skull and fell down and died. So the son was brought before me charged with murder, which it clearly was not. I was in a quandary because I felt myself that the case should not go forward, but on the other hand it was technically manslaughter, because he *did* intend to harm his father and the father had died. So I adjourned, and went and spoke to the District Commissioner, and he said he thought I had better send it forward, and I did. Had I had more confidence, I would have thrown it out. It was thrown out at the next stage; they wouldn't proceed with the case. But all the time this lad had been kept in prison, I think, for months probably, quite unnecessarily.

The most interesting case I had perhaps, although not the most popular one, was when I had ten or more people brought before me jointly accused of murder. It turned out

that these people were members of the Home Guard, and they had been out for a convivial evening and, as they were going home, they came across a stranger. So they challenged him and asked, “What are you doing here?” Well actually he was Giriama from the Coast and he’d come to consult a well-known witch doctor. They didn’t believe his explanations and so they chased him. This poor man ran away and they chased him saying, “You are Mau Mau!” They caught up with him and killed him. This was really a major case, as you could see, and as the chief evidence proceeded I was asking myself, “Who is it that’s telling us all this? Was he just standing there watching what was going on?” And so I questioned this witness quite strongly, and I charged him to tell me whether he had been part of the group that had chased this man and helped to kill him, and he wouldn’t answer. So it was obvious to me then what had happened. He continued to refuse to answer – you make notes as you go along, you see; questions and answers and so forth. So I committed him for contempt of court and adjourned the court overnight and he was sent to the cells. He came back the next morning and he did admit then that he had been involved in the gang. I gave Erastus permission to treat this man as a hostile witness. I do not recall whether he was then arrested or whether he was regarded as having turned Queen’s Evidence, but I was quite pleased to have discovered something about the real truth of the situation. So they were all sent forward in due course for trial.

And then the last case I had involved an element of witchcraft, something always lurking somewhere in the area, something for which Kitui was very well known. The previous District Commissioner had chosen a different strategy from his predecessors who had always prosecuted witches, thus giving them status. He had introduced a policy under which they were all invited to chuck their implements and stones and things on a sort of rubbish fire and everybody would run around laughing at it, and deriding it and so forth; you reduced their influence that way. It used to work quite well, but nevertheless Kitui was popular and there was one case in which a man had killed one of his wives – I think he blamed his impotence on her. He had gone to a witch doctor way down in Kibwezi at the far end near the railway. I was rather annoyed that the police had not brought this man up (or woman, I don’t know which) so that we could question them as to what they had said. They might have played an active part by saying, “Oh well this is somebody you have to get rid of.” But whatever their counsel, this man had killed one of his wives.

That was one case, and then there was another case in which a son was accused of shooting his father. The son was quite an articulate and educated person, an Agricultural Assistant – a good job. This was the last case that I did and the courtroom was absolutely packed. It was obvious that everybody knew the family. They came from a place called Tiva, not too far away. The father had been shot in the dark, I think, from a distance, with an arrow. He'd gone out to look at a cow or something. Evidence of ill feeling in the family was disclosed. This man's mother had been put aside for a new wife; it was a family thing. I did what I could in what was a very serious case. At the end, after I'd sent the case forward, I had the accused man up and I said I thought he ought to have a proper lawyer. If he wanted, I would get him one but it would be expensive. So I sent a telegram to one of the best lawyers in Nairobi, Byron Georgiadis, and described the situation and asked if he would be interested in taking the case. I didn't know how much this man was worth and so on, and I said it would cost him all his cows probably, and he said he would like to go ahead. And I left them to it. Georgiadis sent a telegram straight back saying, "Tell him to say *nothing!*" Well of course it was far too late for that and, as investigating Magistrate, I had to carry out the preliminary inquiry. So that's what happens when you don't have the protection of the rules, because he insisted that he wanted to speak; the usual story. So his case was probably lost. I don't know how that panned out because it was after my return to London.

So much for the judicial side. This was an interesting five months when you think about it. One of the tasks undertaken by the other District Officer, John Carpenter, and me was to go down and check the District Council accounts. We did it turn about and it came to be my turn. I went down to check the books and the District Council were just having the second session of the day. The Treasurer gave the books to me and I inadvertently turned over one page too many. I discovered that the totals had not been reconciled and carried forward at the end of the previous month. So I said this must be done straight away. The Treasurer at once said I would find that they did not add up. Sure enough, I did the whole thing and carried out the reconciliation; they were more than 10,000 shillings short, which was a considerable sum in those days - £500 – very considerable in 1956. So I suspended the Treasurer on the spot, closed the entire Treasury and the poor old Councillors standing outside waiting for their per

diem allowance to get home were told they had to come back later until every single cent in the Treasury was accounted for. I handed over the keys to the Deputy and sent for the police. My friend Jimmy Dobbs came up and I explained the situation. The District Commissioner was away on safari and wasn't back until the end of the week, but I knew what he would want. He would want the District Council to get the money back. I had said to the Treasurer that, if he brought the money back, I would report accordingly to the District Council, and maybe everything would square off. The days went by, and presently Dobbs came up to me and said he thought we might have to bring him in now because there was a rumour that he might scarper. I asked what had happened to the Sh10,000. "They say that he's been building a new house!" So I said, "All right. Bring him in." And he was arrested, and came up for trial after my departure before the visiting Magistrate, who was a circulating District Commissioner, and he was fined 10,000 shillings. The wags said he had made a profit out of it because he stole Sh10,168. But the High Court reviewed the sentence and substituted two years' imprisonment, so that's what happened to him.

Mind you, these killings were not only in the African community. I had a friend who killed his wife's lover ...

MM: This is among the whites?

IB: Yes. And I found out about it. It was quite interesting, actually. Many years back I had made a trip across to France and done an exchange visit with a French lad, and, while I was staying with them, I went out to Versailles and had a look round there, and I joined up with a group of about five or six people who were Dutch. And there was this one Englishman, Walter – and we went round the Galerie des Glaces together and round the gardens, and got to know each other. The next time I saw him I had gone to the cinema in Nairobi in 1955; the lights went up and he was sitting in the seat next to me. I just could not believe it. He was one of the people who had become a temporary policeman during the Emergency. So I kept in touch with Walter, who was a rather vague character. Some months later he came to see me and said he was getting married in the Catholic Cathedral on Saturday. Would I like to come along? I said of course I would be there to support him. When I was sitting in the Cathedral waiting for the ceremony, he wandered up to me and said, oh, by the

way, I don't have a best man! I said I didn't think I could do that. I had got other things to do afterwards and there would be all this business of speeches. Why don't you ask your boss, also present, to do it instead? So he did, and whoever was employing him at that stage in the police acted as best man, and the marriage went ahead. Subsequently the marriage got into terrible difficulties. Walter happened to drive along the road to the west and stopped at a popular hotel half way along the road to the Rift Valley and he saw his wife and her lover sitting out having tea together. What he told the court afterwards was that, on the impulse of the moment, he had rushed in with a knife that he had had in the car. But I know, because he wrote to me stupidly afterwards at the Colonial Office, that he'd driven all the way back to Nairobi to get it. That is premeditation, the difference between manslaughter and murder. I decided the letter to me should be destroyed. He was eventually cleared of murder by an all-white jury, but had to serve time for manslaughter. For all the great reputation of Happy Valley, they were always most censorious when it came to formal relationships, and husbands were nearly always let off very lightly if they murdered their wives, or the other way round, owing to their honour having been impugned. Anyway that was another experience.

In Kitui I think those three things rather encompassed the court side, the water business and the District Council, but I got back into transport licensing before I left. Every month's end, many people travelled to and from Nairobi and the buses were very overcrowded. Within the District folk travelled to the different markets every day in each location – some of them difficult to get to. There were three main roads out of Kitui, to Thika, Machakos and Kibwezi, and thence to Nairobi or Mombasa. Many would-be entrepreneurs wanted to start bus services. So I held a general meeting and said I would support applications for licences *provided* the owners agreed to serve the local markets as well on the other days of the week. It worked out OK; although some got unpopular local routes, I supported them for more popular main routes. We then put in 32 licence applications all at once, to the horror of the Railways. I spoke for them at the Tribunal, and all were granted. Within a short time many were weeded out by the competition but they all got their chance.

MM: Well that was certainly a very good insight into Kenya life.

IB: Well, into administrative life also of course. I found wonderful maps there of the whole area, going back to the 1910s. I'm not sure whether I had them transferred in the end to the National Museum. They were drawn by somebody called AW Champion, who was an extremely dedicated District Officer with a gift for map-making. I still regret that I didn't bring back a proper District map myself. I would love to refer to it now.

MM: And it would show the ownership as well, presumably.

IB: Ownership of what?

MM: Land.

IB: No, because land wasn't owned. In fact I'm not sure whether they had tree rights, not in the sense that they have in the Sudan, which is to the fruit and bark and so forth, but to the honey in particular trees. Everywhere you would go in Kitui you would see these hollowed out logs hanging from an acacia, and they were very important because honey and beeswax, along with castor seed (castor oil), because cotton had given up, were then the most important products in the district – plus meat, of course, from the cattle. The honey was used to brew honey beer.

Now that raises a couple of points too when I think about it. There were two things one could never get enough of in Kitui. The first of these was sugar. Sugar was rationed and allocated essentially by one of my old colleagues in the Ministry of Commerce. It came very largely from the sugar estates over by Lake Victoria, in Kenya, where the sugar-growing estates are. However much we ordered, it always disappeared within the first week. The reason was that it was much cheaper and easier to make beer with sugar than with honey. The other subject of interest was the dispensaries. I discovered that they were invariably short of drugs. Again it didn't matter how much you ordered. I found out from the District Health Officer that, when the drugs arrived at the beginning of the month, everybody wanted their own shot, and believed it would be of no use unless it was injected. Only that kind of medicine did you any good. The patients all got lined up, it was said in order of seniority, and by the end of the month's third or fourth day there would be nothing

left except the three unpopular drugs. It was an interesting lesson, which I've carried forward to to-day. I was asking questions when I was in Sierra Leone a couple of weeks ago about who controlled the distribution and use of the drugs down the line to the community villages etc. You need to know that sort of thing, because it leads directly to the build-up of resistance, which can threaten people all round the world.

Then we had produce control; that was another thing. The revenues came to the District Councils largely, not from poll tax or anything like that (which would be quite difficult to collect), but from market fees, trade cesses, produce cesses for everything which travelled along one of the three main roads out of the Districts, west to Thika, south-west to Nairobi or south-east to the railway line – all those lorries carrying produce had to pay according to the produce which they were exporting.

MM: Oh yes – octroi.

IB: So you would have people testing the lorry load by shoving with a sharp shovel into the sack, making sure that what came out was the same as what had been declared. They were often declared that they were carrying maize or something, whereas in fact it might be green gram. The grams are kind of pea-like things and green gram was very popular. Or possibly even castor seed. The produce prices were coming down quite fast because the Korean War had ended.

I should have mentioned this in relation to Uganda. During the Korean War, the prices of commodities went sky high. That was how Uganda was able to take off economically. Coffee and cotton brought in vast amounts of money for the farmers, so much so that there was a risk of rampant inflation, like the Spanish finding the Inca gold. So Andrew Cohen, the Governor of Uganda, arranged for a system under which a large part of this money was taken and put into “stabilisation funds” which were then used on behalf of the country as a whole. Ultimately, I suppose, it was for the benefit of the coffee growers, but very indirectly. These went to finance all sorts of things like rail extensions and Uganda hotels, the Uganda Development Corporation, nationalised enterprises starting with the support of the State, to get the economy going. It worked quite well in Uganda, but of course, when the produce prices fell in the days of economic liberalisation in the 1950s, then things turned sour. That was

why our cotton ginnery had stopped in Kitui. We grew cotton in Kitui, or could do, but the Jiwaji family who ran the cotton ginnery had stopped operation because it was no longer profitable when I was there in 1956.

MM: Of course cotton was the reason for the railway being built, interesting mainly because it was so essential to an understanding of the colonial situation in East Africa.

IB: One thing we all tend to forget is how short the colonial epoch was. After all, change has always been very rapid in history, but at this time it was extremely fast. There was a well-known European politician, Colonel Grogan, in Kenya, who was said to have walked from the Cape to Cairo before the colonial age arrived. And a very good African friend of mine, who sang in my choir at St Andrew's in Nairobi in the 1960s, said his grandfather remembered the coming of the Europeans to the country. We were privileged to go and visit this old man in his traditional clothes and spear, feathers, everything that he had. Later on he decided that he was going to be baptised a Christian and, at the age of 80-something (though he said he was over 100), he took the name Peter. So we went there and the choir went along and sang a bit at the service, and then sadly, a year or so later, he died and so we went to the funeral too. But it shows how much happened in a single lifetime. My father, after all, was born before powered flight and died only after man had landed on the moon. So every age is fast, and getting faster. Indeed, it is over 56 years since I first got involved in Kenya. Someone of my present age would then have been born in 1896 – before the whole colonial epoch in East Africa.

The railway was seen to be essential by the Imperial British East Africa Company in order to provide supplies for Uganda, the heart of the British activities. They had managed to see off the German claims to that area, and the latter were confined to Tanganyika. Kenya was the country through which Uganda had to be supplied.

So they ran the railway up from Mombasa, the so-called “lunatic line”, up first of all to Lake Victoria. In the early days the East Africa Protectorate was run from Mombasa before Kenya was created, and Uganda came right down as far as Naivasha in the present Rift Valley. Later on they adjusted the boundaries so that all that area fell within Kenya. Then the railway was extended along the mainland route to

Kampala. But, in the time that I was there, the extension of which I just spoke was a spur which ran out to Kasese from Kampala to provide supplies and bring the production from the Kilembe copper mines over in the Mountains of the Moon. The settlement along the line of rail was something which was very much favoured by the second British Governor of what became Kenya, Sir Charles Eliot, and he felt that this could be, so to speak, white man's country and that, if they had farms and so forth along the line of rail, then it would make it profitable to run the railway, and so keep it in business for Uganda. It didn't entirely work out like that, but the line of rail did terminate to begin with at Nairobi, which is where they collected all the supplies in order to take the line over the very difficult hilly section into the Rift and beyond. And that is why Nairobi is the country's capital. The name, I think, is Masai meaning "cold".

MM: Well, thank you very much for that little story about Nairobi and the railways. I think it's important.

IB: That's why, I think, I saw the maize in City Square, because the Railway was occupying the land. The Railway was in fact the progenitor of the city.

MM: Should we now go back to your time as a Principal in the Colonial Office from 1956-61?

IB: Just before leaving the two years in the service of the Kenya Government, I might mention my visit to Uganda, which I made when I was on leave. Once or twice I went up there. During one of these times, in 1956 before I came back – I left after having climbed up Kilimanjaro and visited Zanzibar – but this was an earlier farewell visit to Uganda and some friends. I got in touch with the King of Toro, the Mukama of Toro, and he invited my friends and me to dinner at his palace in Western Uganda. The reason for this was that, during the Queen's Coronation, I had to look after the Kings of Uganda, and Toro was one of the ones who needed the most attention. At one stage we went down to the Coronation air display at Odiham. I took him and Prince Alfred Kingara, the Kabaka's brother, down to see this exhibition. Without a motorway, of course, I knew the route would be completely jammed up for miles around and that we would never get home except after many hours. So I rang my

mother and father, who lived not far away off the route, and said I was bringing the Mukama of Toro to tea, which somewhat threw her. Emergency arrangements were made to recall my father from his office, and the Mukama and Prince and indeed the driver were all entertained to tea, and they were absolutely delighted. It was just the sort of thing the Mukama really liked and of course, wherever you were in Africa, you were offered tea. So we spent a pleasant hour there and, by the time we got on our way, we were soon back in London. When I went to have dinner with him at the palace in Toro, things were a bit different. We found there was a great deal of formality. All the women were away – they were said to be shopping in Kampala, which was a pity but not perhaps surprising – but the various princes and courtiers were assembled and we, rather humbly dressed and humbly presented, were made the guests of honour. He decided that he would like his photographs of the Coronation to be displayed to us all, so people were ordered to go and get them, and had to do this on their knees, and returned accordingly. So we were a little bit embarrassed by the trouble we might have caused, but he of course was very pleased to have returned our hospitality.

One of the things that we did there was to eat at his walnut dining table. This dining table had been the source of considerable trouble to us in the Colonial Office. He had gone to Barkers in Kensington and ordered table and chairs to match that had taken his fancy, at a cost of something like £800. But he had no money. So he said, “Send the bill to the Colonial Office.” This was not the sort of expense that the British voters were expecting to undertake just in exchange for his presence at the Coronation! So we had increasingly frantic calls from Kensington High Street, and finally telegrams had to be sent to Uganda as a result of which the Mukama of Toro’s own local parliament was summoned and had to pass a supplementary estimate to pay for these items of furniture.

I had other experiences at the end of the Coronation visit. One of my tasks was to see that the Kings from Uganda caught the boat train. Now the Kabaka of Buganda was all right; he had his own arrangements. But the two main medium important Kings, the King of Bunyoro and the King of Toro, were in the Mayfair Hotel and I’d given strict instructions that they were to be ready at 10.30 in the morning to catch the 12.00 o’clock train. When we arrived at 10.00, the Government driver and I found that the

Mukama of Toro at least was still in bed, holding a levée in the style of Louis XIV. It took enormous pressure to get them out - fortunately the luggage had been sent on ahead – and driven to Liverpool Street station for the boat train. The Government driver was practically in tears because she said she had another job after this. But I said, “I’m sorry, but if we miss the boat train you will have to drive us all the way to Tilbury!” We made it with about five minutes to spare, only to find that we were on the wrong side of the station, and the elderly King of Bunyoro and the rather gout-ridden Mukama of Toro had to clamber up after me over a rather dizzying iron bridge and descend to the correct platform. I found the gentleman in the top hat was just about to wave his green flag. I cried to the station master, “Stop! Stop for the Kings of Uganda!” at which he lowered the flag, fortunately, and they came puffing down and we stuffed them into a carriage and waved them goodbye.

So those were quite entertaining memories and I was able to tell my other friends who with me in Toro something about that.

Before I left Kenya, which was complicated because Nasser had just closed the Suez Canal, I climbed up to the crater of Kilimanjaro with a friend, and then spent a few days in Zanzibar. I was captivated by its “Arabian Nights” feel, the sense of past history, the redolence of the drying cloves, and the busy merchants in Portuguese and Sokomuhogo (“Cassava Market”) Streets – all in the tiny but bewildering area of Stone Town. The general air of relaxation, complicated by behind-the-scenes networks of inter-personal relations in a small society, gave no hint of the terrible problems to come. One of the days I was there was 10th Mohurram, when the Shi’a mourn the death of Imam Hussein at Kerbela. They had a large procession of men, chanting and lashing themselves in unison till the blood flowed. The police worked hard to keep this separate from the rival celebratory procession of the Sunni community.

Zanzibar seemed like a back-water, but it had been for many years in the 19th century the hub of all outside interest in East Africa. Under pressure from the abolitionists, the British Government decided to try to strangle the slave trade. The journals of Burton, Livingstone and Speke illustrate just how far this had spread in the region. The Arab slavers and their agents spread out from Zanzibar, and that was where they

sold the slaves they had seized. All European travels to the interior began, were equipped, and ended in Zanzibar, where the saying was that “when the Sultan pipes, everyone dances as far as the Great Lakes”. Britain began, soon after the Napoleonic War, by acting to suppress all traffic on the high seas - the kind of operation we now see again as the world attempts to suppress Somali piracy. Eventually it became possible to press the Sultan by stages into decreeing total abolition, first their export, and finally, in 1897, in Zanzibar itself. The present Anglican Cathedral was built on the site of the slave market (several pillars inside are upside down, as the missionary supervising the work was too stretched to oversee everything). A settlement was set up for freed slaves in the now rather deserted Freretown (called after Sir Bartle Frere of Karachi fame).

The whole history of the large British effort to stamp out slavery in Eastern Africa has been overlooked by those preoccupied by what happened on the west of the Continent. A more balanced assessment is now overdue.

Zanzibar became a formal British Protectorate in 1890 when, to the fury of the German adventurer Karl Peters, who had been busy signing up various chiefs on the mainland to acknowledge German protection, the Germans agreed to swap their interest in Uganda, Zanzibar and Witu for the exchange of Heligoland - a British relic of our Hanoverian past. The Sultan’s sway was also acknowledged in what became the Kenya Protectorate, a strip of 10 sea miles inland from high water, which was demarcated by the then Captain Kitchener, fresh from his surveying triumphs in Cyprus. This led to some issues which had to be unravelled before Kenya could become independent. The Sultan had been leant on to cede his rights of government in the Strip to the Germans and British for a forced loan of £200,000, on which he received annual interest of £11,000. Following Sultan Jamshid’s expulsion after the 1964 Revolution, the Government agreed to pay this amount to him directly, and so far as I know it is still being paid, though now worth far less than it was in 1964, or still more 1890.

The physical effects of the ravaging of eastern Africa by the slavers can, I believe, still be seen, in that the population of much of the Tanzania mainland appears notably less physically strong and large than that of the other two countries. Professor

MacKenzie pointed this out to me and proposed that a kind of “reverse evolution” had taken place; all the finest and strongest people had for generations been culled by slavery.

The governing class in Zanzibar were the Omani Arabs (to which the Sultan belonged, following the Ibadhi sect) and then those from the Hadhramaut in the Yemen. They had a pretty easy life; many owned great clove plantations, which were often harvested by contract labour, while the land around could be leased to poorer Shirazis (non-Arab peoples from Persia) or African tenants. When the Zanzibar Revolution struck in 1964, many Arabs had to flee. Those who went to Oman found a country on the brink of modernisation by the new (the present) Sultan, and formed a ready-made set of civil servants and managers for their new homeland, where few were then educated.

Sorry for the excursion that goes a little bit beyond your question on the railway.

MM: Never mind! Returning to your time in London: you were promoted to be a Principal in the Colonial Office and you were there for five years.

IB: Yes, a bit more than five really, nearly six. It was almost automatic that one got promoted to Principal after two years as an AP but what had been changed while I was away was that, instead of being posted to another department – Finance or South Pacific or whatever it might be – I was put back in the East Africa Department in charge of the Kenya desk, as the Principal dealing with policy towards Kenya in that Department. I think they had decided that it was better for someone who knew something about the country to deal with it instead of sending him off to something completely new. This gave me a six year run at Kenya in particular, but also involved me in all East African problems, because they were intertwined.

Most of the difficulties and the work that we had to do through those four years were connected with first of all the progress of the Emergency and all that went with it – in particular, of course, what happened over detention, the scandal of the Hola prison deaths, which came towards the end in 1959, and the general security side of things. I

had one assistant to deal with that side, and with the floods of PQs (Parliamentary Questions), and correspondence with the public on Emergency matters.

The other main issue was the whole question of political movement and change. The ordinary politics of the country again reasserted themselves as the security threat disappeared into the forests. With that came the problem of how to tackle the poverty and lack of development that helped to cause unrest, what to do about the land issue and what, indeed, to do about liberalising the regime and getting rid of the racial barriers which still invested society in some places.

So it was a very busy and difficult time, but fascinating. We had a lot of work to do, particularly on the political side, because the situation was no longer at all what it had been before. We had to move on beyond the first multiracial Government. It was essential to develop “non-Mau Mau” leadership and, for other obvious reasons, that the African Members of the Legislative Council should be directly elected. The Colonial Office always wanted a common electoral roll, but politically this was impossible. The Deputy Governor, Wally Coutts, came up with a “qualified franchise” for the new African constituencies, based essentially on educational attainment and property. This was a useful start. The first African elections in early 1957 saw a vital contest between Tom Mboya and a lawyer called Clement Argwings-Kodhek in Nairobi, both of them from the Luo area of Nyanza. Mboya won on personality, and quite rightly so. And he effectively became the practical leader of the African Elected Members, and managed brilliantly to work the political machine, gradually to oblige the Government and the other parties to move along the path towards constitutional change, which they didn’t want to do as fast as he wanted. For instance, he got the African Elected Members to boycott the Legislature although they were unable to stop the participation of the separate Africans specially elected, with parallel Asians and Europeans, on a new Common Roll. These and other major changes, including increased African representation, had been brought in at the end of 1957 by Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary, to replace the Lyttelton constitution.

This might be a good point at which to say a bit more about Mboya. He was from South Nyanza, not Central, which was the main home for the Luos. His formidable intelligence and tactical skill were first displayed as secretary to the Kenya

Federation of Labour, and he was soon recognised and picked up by the American unions, who dominated the non-Communist ICFTU, as a coming politician able to counter the blandishments of the WFTU and the flow of scholarships for Kenyan students to the People's Friendship University in the USSR and other Eastern institutions. Soon he was endowed with considerable patronage over rival scholarships to the USA. Keith Kyle describes well the ins and outs of his character and career, but if he had not won this first vital direct election he could not have so rapidly become indispensable to African politics.

I saw him at close quarters during the East African Community negotiations, and thereafter when we began to start negotiations for the association of the surrounding countries with the new Community. He was watchful, diligent and effective in argument. Unfortunately he was also very conscious of his own abilities, and saw no need to behave diplomatically towards others (except perhaps Kenyatta, whom he hoped to succeed). He seriously offended President Obote's brother-in-law, Adoko Nekyon, a powerful Uganda minister, by making fun of his poor command of Swahili to a Kenyan crowd at a meeting where Nekyon was a guest. He did not seem to care what personal enemies he might make. One, or several, of these had him assassinated in July 1969. His supporters seemed to have no doubt that this was organised by Kikuyu, the finger being pointed amongst others at Charles Rubia, previously Mayor of Nairobi. Kenyatta's car was rocked when the President went to the Memorial Service at the R.C. Cathedral – an unprecedented indignity for the Old Man. But the truth is that many others did not wish him well either.

Keith Kyle's book on "The Politics of the Independence of Kenya"

On the other side, we had the emergence of multi-racial politics, particularly led by Michael Blundell who was the European settler leader for most of this time, and his friends who were quite influential, the Asian groups, more or less influential, and the Arabs in the middle. In March 1958 he formed a multi-racial group, the New Kenya Party. Its manifesto included opening the White Highlands to all races, and in October the Kenya Government issued a Sessional Paper proposing that this be done, on the basis of good husbandry, supervised by a multi-racial Board. The White Highlands bastion was visibly crumbling away. There was a small white group

organised by the Capricorn Africa Society on Blundell's "left" and a larger group of relative diehards to his "right". This whole process of where to go, how quickly to go, what to do, all documented of course in the Public Records Office – you can also find in a book which Keith Kyle wrote called 'The Politics of the Independence of Kenya'. I have this book somewhere and it is very useful. It starts a bit later than my own personal history but you'll find quite a lot of interest in that. I would recommend anybody interested in these events who wants something readable and digestible to peruse Keith's book. I can also commend a blow-by-blow historical account, drawn from many sources, of events from before the Emergency to independence, written by James Franks and called "Scram from Kenya".

The problems on the security side and the question of violence within the detention camps, particularly, and prison camps were something that came up time and time again. We had very serious concerns because, every now and then, there would be a report of a new death. The way it was set up in Kenya was largely that there was a Special Commissioner appointed to run the detention camps. The prisons, such as Hola, came under the Commissioner of Prisons, but if you were detained without trial you went to one of the camps. It was obvious that with numbers like 70,000 or so in detention, at the height of the Emergency, this could not be sustained and people had to be released, and sometimes risks taken over whether they could be still be said to be a danger to the rest of the public. The largest camps, like the ones in Manyani, were really very difficult to run, apart from anything else. The detainees were graded according to the degree of their Mau Mau involvement and readiness to accept "cleansing" from the oath, and gradually moved "down the line" into more open conditions, ending finally with restriction and then release. As the numbers declined, people were let out according to classification, whether they were thought to be less committed, and whether they were prepared to say they would co-operate. Of course, once they were out of detention they were out of detention. The return of some of the ex-detainees to their homes obviously then created tensions within their own society. I have a very good, then my best, African friend who now lives in London; I got to know him in the early 1960s. I asked him about his father who had been in detention in Manyani as a Mau Mau suspect for five years or so – with a lot of hardship to the family - and he said to me, "Well my uncle was on the other side, and he got killed." I asked if they ever found out who did it because, if he was a 'loyalist', then there

would be consequences. “Oh yes, we know who did it. But the “Old Man” (that’s Kenyatta) has told us that we have to forgive and forget because, if we don’t, then our society will never be at peace again. We know who they were but we just don’t speak to them.” And that was how they were getting by as a result of the continuing problems, that linger probably still among some families and areas.

Some violence occurred unlawfully, I am quite sure. There were certainly some occasions when people were allowed to do what wasn’t permitted. But the Governor, Evelyn Baring, and the Attorney General, Eric Griffith-Jones, were absolutely firm on the policy against the use of compelling or punitive force, and I have seen, and you can read in the National Archives, papers which illustrate this. It was very clear that you may not use beating force, as they called it. The only kind of force that could be used on a detainee was force to restrain them from hurting themselves or another person; restraining force yes, beating force no. And I am certain that that line was crossed many times. We’re not talking about Hola; we’re talking about the whole range of the detention camps. In one or two camps in particular there were incidents about which I think the Governor was never told the truth.

At a very late stage in Baring’s tenure as Governor, just before he left, it was revealed to him that some of the top senior Civil Servants in the District Administration had deliberately concealed from him things that were going on that shouldn’t have been going on, which they had clearly undertaken, or allowed to happen, in defiance of his orders. When I learned that, I was back in the Colonial Office. I was absolutely horrified, because I felt so shocked that the honour of a body, which I had belonged to, had been tainted by such indiscipline, in deliberate defiance of the law. I felt like resigning, I really did, and nearly went public, with all the consequences that would have followed under the Official Secrets Act. I went, in fact, to consult a very good friend of mine whom I respected, Canon Bewes, who had been the Africa Secretary for the Church Missionary Society and whom we had sent out on a three-man mission, post-Hola, to try and get to the bottom of things and recommend how things could be improved. The other two were Duncan Fairn, Chairman of the Prison Commission, and Sir George Beresford-Stooke, a former Colonial governor. Bewes, however, was a Kikuyu speaker. Bewes said to me, ‘Look, you’re not going to do any good by going and speaking out. What is going to happen now, this is plain, is that

the truth is not to be spoken, but various things have been changed as a result. There's to be a general amnesty on both sides; a lot of people are now going to be let out regardless; the thing will be a step towards reconciliation.' He put forward these other arguments to me which I am sure would also have been mooted at the top of the Colonial Office. If I had gone public, I would have destroyed my career and probably worse. There would have been an immense row, enough seriously to damage the Government. However, it is possible that those concerned tried to calculate fairly what would be the best course for the country in the circumstances, given that we were nearly at the end of the line. The point was that nearly every detainee by then had been let free; there were only about 2,000 left. This was where the trouble was coming from, because they of course were the hardest nuts to crack. One prosecution had to be brought against a very much honoured loyalist, a man called Samuel Githu, who had been given the George Medal, and we didn't want that either because of the effect it had on the remaining loyalist Kikuyu population.

So when you have that kind of background, people desperate to try and bring the exercise to an end, thinking that by a bit of beating force they could manage to hasten the process along, but anyway the Governor need not be told – this is the kind of atmosphere in which, of course, these things happen. Despite this, I cannot myself forgive those responsible. It was their duty to go to Baring and argue things out openly – not substitute *their* judgement for *his*. I think they knew, however, that he would never have sanctioned what was going on.

Hola was a prison and consequently completely different legally, but the deaths occurred because of the same slackness over discipline. I think the Commissioner of Prisons came badly out of this. There certainly wasn't the kind of strict control over what was being done, and done by warders of course, who were mainly people from other tribes, to make sure that prisoners were properly treated. That is why these people died, and there were certainly efforts to cover up the facts, probably including by the investigating Magistrate.

As we get further in time from the Mau Mau emergency, which led to several other personal accounts by people on both sides and to a rather derided official history written by Frank Corfield, there are more and more attempts to convert Mau Mau into

a purely nationalist movement and to claim some association with its “freedom fighters.” We might compare this with those youngsters in Zimbabwe who style themselves “war veterans”, although many were not even born during the struggle against Ian Smith, the white minority Prime Minister of Rhodesia from 1964-1979. The dissent and even shame with which Mau Mau is still regarded can be seen from the fact that successive Kenya Governments, led by both Kenyatta and Moi, continued to ban the organisation for nearly 40 years after independence, until 2003.

This was a very preoccupying subject and took up much of the last two years of my own time as a Principal in charge of Kenya. But I was taken off at the height of the Hola crisis because of the crisis in Nyasaland. I was given instructions to drop all the Kenya stuff; this was much more urgent. We were about to have the Devlin Report published on the events following the return of Hastings Banda to Nyasaland, the ensuing troubles there, and the declaration of a State of Emergency there. Justice Devlin had his own background, of course, which was I think Irish, and on page one, I think everybody realised that the journalists would look no further than page one, they would read that “Nyasaland is a police State”. This was not the headline that anybody wanted, so it was decided by Ministers that they had to have their answer out at the same time as the report was published. The answer had to come from the Governor, Robert Armitage. I was summoned, and there was a ministerial week at Chequers. Lord Hailsham was there, Robert Armitage, the Governor, was there. I was there to help and, of course, the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, and one or two other people came, including those who knew Nyasaland, which I didn't know at all. We then sat down and produced a response to the report, in the form of a despatch which Robert Armitage was to send to us, and then we would publish it at the same time as the report was issued in three days' time.

It was like one of those Greek mythological characters. I sat down on the stairs and did the first bit, and Lord Hailsham did the legal bit and the Governor did the tail at the end! It was all done in Chequers. It was the second time I'd been at a Chequers meeting; the other one was very interesting too and we'll come back to that in a moment.

That was a somewhat side exercise that took me away from Kenya.

The other Chequers meeting was very fascinating too because it happened after the independence of Ghana, when it was quite obvious that we were going to have to define what ‘self-government’ meant. The aim was always “responsible self-government” but nobody said, ever, ‘independence.’ It wasn’t a word that was used then. Some people understood the two to be the same, but they weren’t of course. You frequently had countries with internal self-government; Rhodesia had been a self-governing Colony for years, a kind of paradox in terms. Therefore the Colonial Office got together a special gathering in January 1959 and we took over Chequers for nearly a week at which the three Governors – Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika – came together and tried to hammer out a common framework for phased political advance which could still leave open the possibility of the three countries federating if they so chose. We had previously attended, some of us, a seminar at Oxford, which was run by one of my former tutors, Stuart Hampshire, who took us through things like ‘What is freedom?’ We were thinking about that, you see. We were thinking about issues like the protection of minorities and the rights of majorities, attempting to find our way through the complex balance of issues which would surround any ultimate arrangements to be made. We came up at that meeting – I think Julian Amery was there too - with a kind of schema under which it was intended, if possible, to advance the three East Africa countries together broadly at the same rate to full independence, and, if they chose, to have a Federation. This was one of the unresolved issues. I remember that the book of the year was Mary Renault’s *The King Must Die*, and everybody had read it except the Governor of Uganda, who looked very much at sea during the conversation about this volume. It was quite an experience and we went away from Chequers thinking we had got something now. Hardly had people returned to East Africa, than the plan broke down because Dick Turnbull, Governor of Tanganyika, later to be its Governor General, said it would not do. Nyerere would never wait so long as five years (or whatever the timetable was), for full independence. Turnbull told us it had got to be earlier or the whole plan would fail. At the time everything was going very smoothly; there was no contention; Nyerere could see there was a path; he was a reasonable man etc. So it became obvious that we were going to have an East Africa at which some countries were going to become independent before others. The consequences of that for the Federation idea, I’ll have to tell you later.

Later in 1959 I went to a meeting of the four colonial Powers, hosted by the Belgians, at which we were to exchange information about political events and plans in our respective territories. The French led off with an exhaustive account of events in their areas, including a lot about Togo and the Ivory Coast. After that it was our turn, and we too had much to report. The Belgians then announced that they were having a Cabinet crisis over whether the Congo should be led to independence in twenty years' time; so they could not say anything. Finally the Portuguese smiled sweetly and declared that they had "nothing to report" – nothing had happened, or was likely to happen, in their possessions! Within months, of course, the Belgians had decided to scuttle from the Congo leaving it in a deplorably unprepared state for the challenges to come, with all the terrible consequences we then saw, and have since seen.

So those were some of the main issues, I think, that occurred during the four years I was there, but I have not mentioned the question of the land reforms in Kenya.

It's one of the achievements, I think, of Kenyatta to recognise on his return from a good many years in detention that things had changed dramatically in his own countryside. He saw things going on there; he saw the fruits of Swynnerton's agricultural revolution which completely transformed it. It did not at all look like the countryside that he'd left, for reasons, which I will explain. Instead of saying, as some people would, all this is wrong; we must go back to where it was when we started (I think Ahmed Ben Bella did that in Algeria, or tried to do it), he said, No, I think this is a good thing and we should build on it and take it forward. He was capable of recognising things that had happened without him and without his imprimatur and putting his blessing on them, which is one reason why he became a very successful first leader of the independent Kenya.

How had this change come about? I'll go back to the problems of the land I mentioned earlier, the problems of the pressure of growing population and so forth. Sir Evelyn Baring and the Government in London had what they called a two-pronged approach: first was military and second was economic. It was realised that you had to have, as Kenya had no other resources, a really profitable agricultural scene which

could not rely on settler farms any more, and we had to transform African lands into really productive farms. Roger Swynnerton, the Director of Agriculture, produced a very interesting and convincing plan for African-based production of cash crops and modern farming, on a small scale of course. CD and W money was available. That was all very well, but were people ever going to plant coffee trees or whatever if they didn't have any secure title to the land? No, it wouldn't work. We had to have the two going together. Therefore a task force was formed consisting of Rowton Simpson, who was the Colonial Office Land Tenure Adviser, Anthony Webb, who was the Solicitor General in Kenya, and myself. We got together in London for some time – it was rather a quiet summer – and worked out in detail the land laws which would confer absolute freehold tenure upon the owners of redistributed land.

Rowton had absolutely no time for English land law, as it then stood. He followed Torrens, and was determined to come up with something simpler and better than we had in London. His excellent short report on the tenure of land in Lagos begins with quotations from English judges about the deeds with which they had to deal – “difficult to decipher, disgusting to touch and impossible to understand”! Kenya must be given not registration of title, but registration of *land*. And so it was.

What had to be done was first of all measure all the land there was in particular areas and see to whom the various little bits belonged, because it had all got split up. Then those bits had to be consolidated into reasonably viable farms. If they were very small, they were given a plot in the village. This had to be done, not by us, but by large committees of local Kikuyu who agreed that X belonged to Y and all that sort of thing. Then these new plots were planted up with hedges and the old hedges were taken out, after which of course there was no longer any evidence of who had had what before. Land registration of those new pieces took place in the names of the owners. The Land Register was years, decades ahead of English law. You could more or less fit it in a shoebox. It was *land* that was registered, not *title*; the front card was white I think, giving the ownership; then you had a pink one behind if somebody had leased it and a blue one if it was under mortgage, or whatever. In order to buy and sell, the two parties simply went to the Registry and paid the fees and made the changes.

So that gave the security that was needed and with that came the Swynnerton Plan. Farms were planned out along the ridges to reduce erosion. You would see yourself, Malcolm, when you were there what effect this had. The change between my first visit to Kikuyuland in 1953 and ten years later was absolutely incredible. This gave Kenya a huge foundation of prosperity. I remember particularly helping some African friends of mine. There was one guy whom I was supporting through the Church by paying some of his secondary school fees, and he said he had an older brother, Samuel, up at Kiamba'a and could we go up and visit him? So we went up there. He had beautiful land, although quite a small holding. There was Samuel, a very nice man with not a large holding with quite a fall on it down to the side, and about three or four sisters to look after, with no means of making money. So I said to him, if he would do all the work on the farm, I would stake him to improved seeds and fertilisers, and would see what he could make of it. It was the best development I've ever done, because he had, I forget how many bags of maize (60) in the first season, and he said, "Well we've got a lot of potatoes too but, when we took them to the market, everybody else had theirs too so I only got nineteen shillings a bag." The whole thing was clearly viable so I said, "Next year why don't you plant tea bushes on the ridge down below, then you won't need the potatoes." So it worked and you could see this thing before your eyes; it was really very exciting.

The other thing that was very interesting was the way in which dairy milk operations worked. There had been the Kenya Co-operative Creameries run largely by Europeans. This extended its operations in Kikuyuland. There were cooling places everywhere. Everybody sold off their scrub cattle because there was a great demand for meat in Nairobi, and they bought, large Guernseys usually, and the milk came flowing forth every evening; a very clever operation, collected twice a day, and they were paid regularly of course. Unlike maize or something where you get paid only once a year, you had the cheque every month. Samuel also got into the milk business this way. So that was what brought the country forward economically towards Independence. Then of course there came later on, not to do with me, the transfer of many of the White Highlands farms to peasant farmers.

MM: Would you like to say a word about that?

IB: I would in a way, but I wasn't personally involved with that – others came after me. The only thing that I had to do, and I held on to it as long as I could, was at the end of 1960 when I gave up the Kenya job. I went on to a different Department. There was the need to get the “White Highlands” abolished so that anyone could buy or sell (as many settlers wanted to do). My successor, to take over my portfolio, was Peter Kitcatt, who was the very same person from whom I'd taken over as an Assistant Principal six years earlier. It was agreed that he would take over all the rest of the portfolio, but I would hang on to these two files because I wanted to see this through and, when we finally got the Order in Council for the Kenya Highlands scrapped, I thought to myself I had taken part in history. Also the Native Lands Trust one went as well. The great argument about ‘the White Highlands’ was over.

From that time forward, other political events had overtaken us and I should describe those because we had the succession of Iain Macleod as against Alan Lennox-Boyd as Colonial Secretary, and we had a couple of Constitutional Conferences chaired first by him and then his successor, Maudling, in Lancaster House. This was the traditional place for all such conferences to take place, as territories approached self-government or independence, and its opulent grandeur is a bit daunting to participants first time round. At the first Conference in January 1960 I was the Deputy Secretary, my boss being Dick King from the Cabinet Office, who was later one of my Permanent Secretaries at the ODA/ODM.

As constitutional expert adviser to the conference the Office obtained Professor W.J.M. Mackenzie, I think from Manchester University. At one stage he gave me informal tuition in the “Wyndham Acts” which had dealt with the reform of land holdings in Ireland, citing these as a possible model for helping to solve the problems of the White Highlands – I found this idea uncomfortably premature, at that early stage. Another day, however, we met at the Reform Club, and as we looked at the tapes we saw the report of Macmillan's “wind of change” speech in South Africa. Bill MacKenzie at once said that this changed everything.

However, our Conference hit a snag before it even started. Whereas Blundell's New Kenya Party and the rival all-white group were prepared to sit down with the African Elected Members they were, understandably, completely opposed to anyone taking

part who had anything to do with Mau Mau. Knowing this, the African Members, under the influence of Tom Mboya, deliberately insisted that they wished to have as their permitted delegation Adviser a prominent Mau Mau sympathiser (some said more than that), Peter Mbiyu Koinange. Koinange was a son of the senior chief believed to have organised the murder of senior chief Waruhiu, which had triggered off the Emergency. Peter Koinange was in effect in exile in Britain; he knew he would have been detained instantly if he had returned to Kenya. This move by the African Members was partly to cover their own flank (though they had among them several highly respected Kikuyu like James Gichuru, subsequently Finance Minister), and partly to engineer a confrontation as a trial of strength. The delays went on and on, for I think two weeks or more, until the problem was solved by our negotiating an agreement that badges would be issued to unnamed “Advisers” to each delegation, which they could allocate as they wanted. The African Members promptly gave theirs to Peter Koinange, but thereafter paid him absolutely no attention.

There were stresses and strains on all sides, and some of these helped to create the subsequent split between KANU – the National Union – and KADU – the Democratic Union, the latter representing the smaller tribal groups against the Kikuyu-Luo alliance. I recall at one stage the conference room doors crashing open, as one member emerged during the talks. Was it a walk-out? No, it was the independent-minded Taita arap Towett, who just felt he had to have a drink!

When the real business at last started, the impact of Macmillan’s speech at once became apparent. It had been decided by Iain Macleod that he had to come out straight and say there is going to be an African-run country, no longer messing around with multi-racial or non-racial or any other. Of course, once said, we couldn’t go back on it. The African members won the support of a very solid dairy farmer with a huge moustache, Bruce McKenzie, who subsequently became Kenyatta’s Minister of Agriculture in Kenya. He agreed with that. He went across from Blundell’s party to join what I call the African Members’ Group and took part with them in subsequent proceedings. In spite of the appearance of a farmer who had such a good reputation locally, there was a great deal of panic among the white farmers who asked what was going to happen in the future? They had thought they

were going to be there for the rest of their lives and be able to pass their leases on to their children, and, suddenly it was not going to be like that. Blundell of course was accused of treachery; Iain Macleod was regarded with hatred in those circles, and it was necessary to do something to boost confidence. It meant the collapse of the markets. In fact the Colonial Development Corporation had to rescue all three local building societies because of this.

The Earl of Perth, the Colonial Office Minister of State, floated the idea of the prospect of a £5m loan to be lent by the World Bank. Of course he didn't mention that the World Bank would never pay for the acquisition of farms, but they would pay for redevelopment on a small-holder basis. So, in order to manage the transition effectively starting between willing buyer and willing seller, the British Government had to launch a proper scheme for the transfer of successively large amounts of land to African peasant holdings. That was how it was done. And we had before us the example of the Wyndham Acts in Ireland, which Professor Bill Mackenzie, the constitutional expert, quoted to me; but I had to look them up.

With the land bit, I suppose, as I came in I went out, so to speak.

MM: When you said the repeal of the "White Highlands Order" meant the end of that as an issue, did you mean that it opened the way for the buying out of the white farmers?

IB: The point about the Highlands Order in Council is that it said that no non-European could buy land in the Highlands except with the consent of, I forget who it was, in special circumstances. There was the most frightful row when I was in Kenya about property belonging to Michael and Susan Wood, who were regarded as terribly leftwing; they were Capricorn Africa Society members and all that, up in Limuru, where they turned their farmhouse into an all-faith Christian conference centre, which members of any race could attend. There was an occasion on which some European lady rang them up only to hear 'an African voice' on the far end of the line; and there was a terrible shindig about how they had broken the law. Evelyn Baring had himself to step in and tell the protesters not to be silly. So sensitivities were like that and when the Highlands Order in Council was repealed, the legal framework for that

exclusivity disappeared, so it meant that, schemes or no schemes, anyone could then buy or sell land in the Highlands.

These reforms were the basis on which Kenya's post-independence prosperity was built, but their virtue is now being fast eroded by two factors, not unrelated. First, we did not want to change the customary laws about succession, so as people died their plots became more and more sub-divided, though without leaving uncertainty of ownership, as had been the case before. As the towns and cities grew, however, many of these small plots shot up in value, so the owners were often better off. However, out in the countryside the smaller and smaller holdings could no longer yield a proper living. The second factor is the general growth of population in the "host" areas. Where previously there was plenty of room for all, and buyers from other tribes could add to the general prosperity, now the younger generation see these bought plots as something which should belong to their own tribal group alone. Hence the planned move by the Kalenjin around Eldoret to get rid of the Kikuyu settled among them, in the wake of the recent controversial elections.

MM: I think that covers that one very well, thank you. So should we now move on to your next period which would be in the Department of Technical Cooperation ...

The Ethiopian border

Before we do that, I'd like to explain that of course there were other matters on my desk. When I was in Kenya with the Police Commission we had visited detachments of the Force all round the country, including the Northern Frontier District. There we had met the Kenya-Ethiopian Boundary Commission. Its work was to delineate the frontier in accordance with the deal negotiated by Britain with Haile Selassie after the War, under which we exchanged two smaller but locally important wells for one larger well. The importance of wells in an area which is still Biblically based on camels and other livestock, with associated clan raiding and killings over water and grazing, could not be over-estimated.

This exchange in turn was stimulated by the need to fix Ethiopia's frontiers all round. Rather wisely, the Emperor had refused to do a general deal and insisted on taking

each section separately. This led to problems for us over British Somaliland, since “our” Somalis were accustomed to graze their herds freely at certain times of year on the Ethiopian side of the border, and there were many Colonial Office files on the twin problem of the “Haud” and the “Reserved Areas”. Somali dissatisfaction with what emerged fuelled their desire for the union of all Somalis, and adoption of a flag with a five-pointed star, signifying union for the British and formerly Italian areas, the (Ethiopian) Ogaden, Djibouti (then still a French possession, but occupied by both Somali and non-Somali tribes) and the eastern half of the Kenyan N.F.D. - east of the so-called “Somali Line”, whose rigorous maintenance, to protect the non-Somali Boran people, was one of the chief preoccupations of all NFD administrators. The British UN Mandate over previously Italian Somaliland would expire on 1 July 1960, and would plainly not be renewed. Yet British Somaliland had no real social and economic infrastructure to sustain its own eventual self-government. As a result it was decided to make our own Protectorate independent five days earlier than 1 July, and for a process to be launched which allowed the two areas to amalgamate. The new state has since fought several wars with Ethiopia over the Ogaden, but the Kenya question was settled, as it had to be, before Kenya’s independence. The current chaotic situation in this broken-down State represents a huge failure on the part of the colonial Powers, the rest of Africa, and of course the Somali peoples themselves.

At any rate, when I was back in London we suddenly got enquiries from the Boundary Commission about exactly where they had to stop. Where, in fact, did Kenya end and the Sudan begin? This was by no means an easy question. It had been traditional since before Sudan’s independence for each Government to gazette the administrative officer on the other side of the border, as well as its own, so as to allow raiders such as the Karamojong and the Dabotha/Topossa to be pursued if, as often happened, they raided across the frontier to rustle cattle and kill each other. I managed to disinter, from the then Colonial Office archives at Staines, a vast volume which included the actual decree by Kitchener, when Governor-General of the Sudan, fixing the frontier with what was then “Uganda”. This decree described it as running “due east” along the peaks of a certain mountain range until it hit Ferguson’s Gulf, then part of what was called Lake Rudolf (now Lake Turkana). There were two things wrong with this. First, the peaks did not run “due east” to the Gulf. Secondly, the Gulf had in fact dried up. There was no obvious point at which the two joined the actual Ethiopian

border. We were uneasy about the consequences if Khartoum learnt that the border had encroached on “their” land, but there could be no gap through which any raiders could slip without fear of the consequences. Fortunately, in the end good sense prevailed on all sides, and the tri-junctional point was fixed on a headland a bit above where the Gulf should have been (and probably is again now, as a result of global warming or other climate variations).

One file contained assessments by two different expert sources of the consequences of addiction to the herb khat (*Catha Edulis*). This is a green leaf extremely popular among Somalis and Yemenis, and it grows wild on largish trees high on the slopes of Mt. Kenya and similar terrain. The leaves are picked and sent by lorry at night to keep their freshness, then sent by air to the country of consumption. Customers would congregate at the airports to receive their orders. One W.H.O. source assessed the drug as extremely dangerous; another, as of no great importance. I tried chewing it myself one day at an Arab party in Mombasa during the 1960s, but felt no great effect; perhaps what I was given was not properly fresh.

Transfer to Economic General Department of the Colonial Office 1961-62 **The formal commencement of international development assistance**

IB: My next Colonial Office job was in the Economic General Department. This was quite interesting too but it was in a way leading on to the Department of Technical Co-operation. If you look back at the whole history of development and the developing countries, and less developed, and all that sort of jargon, you find that the start of all this really was about in 1959/60, so I remember it, when the OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Co-operation) had completed its task of distributing the Marshall Plan funds. There were just a few little things left over to do with Greece and Turkey, and the OEEC was looking for a new role. It was transformed instead into the OECD, which still exists to-day. The Development Assistance Group, as it had been, was transformed into the Development Assistance Committee, which is the body of all donor nations also belonging to the OECD – it now contains Mexico and various others like that, but in those early days it was basically the northern donors. The formation of the DAC plus the activities of the World Bank beyond reconstructing Europe was the start of the development epoch.

The World Bank was drawn into this when President Eugene Black agreed that the Bank would finance the development of the Indus Waters Basin, to cement an agreement between Pakistan and India on the division of the waters.

So, with the start of the activities by the World Bank in the so-called “third world” countries, and with the formation of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD, the groundwork was laid for beginning on the theory and practice of development as now seen. It was decided by the Conservative Government that we would set up the new Department for Technical Co-operation, in order to bring together the work which had been hitherto done in bits by the Foreign Office (which had a so-called Development Division in Beirut for the Middle East), the Commonwealth Relations Office (which had work which was associated with aid to the Sub-Continent), and the Colonial Office. Of course the Colonial Office had by far the greatest part of the British development operation, because we had the entire machinery for supplying people overseas for specialist and general posts, quite apart from all the training programmes, CD and W schemes and other arrangements and a huge range of professional advisers.

It was not agreed at the beginning to bring together so-called “capital aid” – that is to say financial assistance – and only technical co-operation was put together in one, to be a kind of subservient department to the others. This was nonsense, of course, as I very soon found out when I was in Tanganyika. I got our High Commissioner there to write a non-party despatch explaining the disadvantages of having the financial assistance run by the Trade Commissioner and the technical co-operation by me. But it wasn’t changed until 1964 when the Labour Government came in.

Apart from going to the OECD Technical Co-operation Committee, my main job in the Economic General Department turned out to be to write that part of the White Paper which set out all that the Colonial Office did, and to help to formulate the work and structure of the DTC, so it did lead on. After it was done, and the White Paper was published and approved, the question arose who wanted to go where. I was given the option of sticking with effectively the political bits of the Office or staying where I was and then automatically being transferred to Technical Co-operation Department. I hadn’t seen any of the consequences; I couldn’t foresee how it would go, but I

decided to stay where I was and take my chances. So I ended up in the second maid's bedroom with a coal scuttle, somewhere at the top of a small place in Carlton House Terrace, which was our first home, and began my initial work there.

MM: What did that lead on to?

IB: Within a very few months came the question of how to look after the Technical Co-operation programmes in East Africa, and particularly in Tanganyika, which was now independent. It was agreed between the powers that be, and Sir Andrew Cohen as the Permanent Secretary no doubt was the force behind this, that we had to have DTC people to help to run the DTC programmes. The High Commissioners on the whole liked that idea because they didn't think they knew anything about it and thought it would be a lot of trouble – which it was of course. It was agreed that Bruce Greatbatch, who was Head of the Northern Nigerian Civil Service at that stage and was about to retire, would eventually go to Dar es Salaam in Tanganyika. But there was going to be a gap of some eight months or so which needed to be covered and so they decided to ask me to go out to Dar as First Secretary (Technical Co-operation) and start things off; get them going before Bruce came and took over. It was going to be only a short tour. Nobody knew then that it would go on not for eight months but for seven years.

First Secretary, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, 1962-64

I had the pleasure of going back to East Africa and finding my feet as a proper diplomat, which I'd never been before. I was astounded by the amount of social activity which one was intended to undertake. However, this diminished a bit when Nyerere changed Government working hours to 7.30-2.30, to meet the daily routine of those at the bottom of the Civil Service. But business stuck to the old hours, with traditional lunch-break, so we had to follow them. It meant, for me, much less chance to entertain up-and-coming local civil servants. It was of course a very different country from Kenya, but I had an opportunity to go up there and visit old friends at Christmas time in 1962, and I was able to be 'best man' at a wedding of a very old African friend of mine – or rather 'chief best man'. I found myself in Nairobi just

after Christmas, before going back to Dar, and I also spent Christmas itself far up country with one of my former Kitui colleagues and his American wife.

The work itself was largely trying first of all to get to grips with the whole problem of how many people were going to be available from Tanganyika itself to run the country in all its various aspects – and this meant primarily Africans. Obviously the most politically sensitive jobs would be in District Administration, but then we had to consider everybody through to the Director of Geological Services, the foresters and specialists of every conceivable kind that had been supplied before by the Colonial Office through the Colonial Service. The system was that all staff got paid local salaries, but those recruited from overseas had large “inducement allowances”, with pension rights on top. However, many of the local civil servants were “non-designated”, chiefly Asians, and for political reasons they clearly could not expect to go on dominating the middle level of the Service.

I was asked by Andrew Cohen to have a look at all three countries, as he was going to come out and wanted me to accompany him to take a look around. At that stage I think he had in mind the possibility of setting up what he called the Commonwealth Advisory Group, probably in Nairobi, which would consist of British, Canadian, Australian, Indian and so forth specialists all working as a single what is now called Development Division within one focus; a very ambitious and far-sighted idea. But it soon fell down because of the practicalities. The whole idea of managing such a thing was a nightmare; nobody wanted to turn it over to the Commonwealth Secretariat. So that idea disappeared from view.

I went around East Africa before he came. Remember, I had only a very short time to do this. I did not devote myself much to Tanganyika those first months; I spent my time trying to assess the situation, the training needs and facilities there, and then on to Kenya to see what was needed there, and also up to Uganda. I produced an assessment for each government, and the EACSO, showing the proportions of “designated”, “non-designated” and African staff in every Department for which we should supply places at British institutions to carry our Africanisation. This gave us the measure of the African training and human resource needs (which of course we under-estimated, but it was a start.)

And then Cohen and I went round East Africa together. He very quickly perceived what I myself had already suggested, that it was no use trying to run a complete East African programme from one place, particularly if that was Dar es Salaam; a) the other Governments would never agree; they didn't feel that they wanted to be dealt with from afar; b) it was far too much to take on; c) it wasn't anyway anywhere near the centre. If you had to have anywhere it would be Nairobi. We had to have somebody in Nairobi. So he went back and reflected on this and we found, when we got to Uganda, that the Commonwealth Relations Office had already arranged for their intended Deputy High Commissioner to look after Technical Co-operation - apparently without consulting Andrew Cohen. I don't think he was very pleased but that was how it was. At least it meant less work for us at that stage. I then would not at all have minded, indeed rather expected, that Greatbatch would come to Dar es Salaam as planned and I would be sent up as number two to Nairobi. But they decided on things the other way round, so Greatbatch went to Nairobi and I stayed in Dar es Salaam for what was then intended to be two years. I started to get to grips with visiting parts of Tanganyika, which is a huge country, and trying to understand the way in which everything worked there. It was extremely interesting.

MM: And dealing with Technical Assistance.

IB: Only dealing with Technical Assistance, yes. I had a number two, Bob Scragg, who was working with me. He was an older guy who was a Second Secretary. There were a number of people whom I already knew. Peter Carter, whom I knew in the Colonial Office before, was acting then as Deputy High Commissioner; Denis Fowler; one or two people that I already knew from before, slightly. And I settled into the life there. It was very interesting because we had a situation under which the Governor-General was Dick Turnbull, and Nyerere was initially the Prime Minister. But he decided that Tanganyika should become a Republic, not surprisingly, and this Republic would need a new constitution. He wasn't going to sit there as Prime Minister while that was done; he would retreat and think about what the country ought to be doing - a kind of philosopher king. Instead of him, therefore, a loyalist called Rashidi Kawawa was made Prime Minister, and, as long as and until Turnbull left, that was the situation. Afterwards, after the Republic was inaugurated,

then Nyerere could come in as President with revised powers and whatever else they put into the constitution. So that was a kind of waiting period. In my first few months Turnbull was still there. There were things like Scottish country dancing evenings going on at Government House still – or State House, whatever it was – and everything was almost going on as it had before.

MM: There wasn't much of a British community – or let's say a white community – in Tanganyika, was there?

IB: Well there were quite a number of Europeans - you would call them 'settlers' anywhere else, but many of them were businessmen and estate managers, not farmers on a Kenyan scale. For instance, the Greek community was very heavily into sisal, and were around the Usumbara Pare mountains, there were Greek sisal fields, and also around Morogoro.

MM: And tea plantations?

IB: No, I don't remember tea in the north, but there might have been, in the Usumbara Pares. There were other European owned mixed farms, particularly cattle, up towards Arusha in the north and Meru up towards the Kenya border, and I rather think that that was where Derek Bryceson came from. He was a TANU supporter, and he was a British farmer. He became the Minister of Agriculture in Nyerere's Government. There was no political coherence or constituency of the kind they had before in Kenya.

And then, of course, one has to remember that Tanganyika is an extraordinarily spread out country even to-day. Professor Mackenzie described it to me very well. He said, "Look, what we have here is a sea of land with islands of population." It has very large areas of bush, which were not exploited, and areas of population clustered around the high ground, particularly around Kilimanjaro, also round the Southern Highlands, and up near the lake, Lake Victoria, West Lake. Those were the three main ethnic groupings. To get from A to B when the roads were not very good took an inordinately long time. That is still a feature of the country, even although the population is growing just as fast as elsewhere. As in parts of Zambia, there still

seems to be plenty of land. Then parts of that, of course, are not easily usable in any case. So I found it a very interesting place to be. There's a charity of which I am now a Director, and my own sponsored child is in Tanzania. I wanted a girl, actually, but I got a boy. I was able to visit him during one of my trips out there, in 2000.

It was a peaceful kind of country. I won't say that things were working all that well; they weren't. But there seemed to be a harmony that was quite typical; a bit like Mombasa. People on Saturday or Sunday evening would all take the kind of *paseo* round the sea front with their children and have ice-creams and chunks of roasted cassava, and it was all very pleasant. Initially, at that time, even in the Districts, there were many administrative secretaries or others who were still ex-Colonial Service Officers, who were now called HM Overseas Civil Service.

When time went on, of course, that changed fairly fast, and President Nyerere brought in new ideas, in particular his version of African socialism. This wasn't at all the same kind of African socialism that Tom Mboya was preaching in Kenya, which an old African friend of mine defined thus: 'African socialism is Western capitalism'! Down in Tanganyika there was a very strong sense of everybody being brothers. I'm not sure about sisters, but brotherhood and togetherness are important. There's a very strong emotional feeling in much of Africa: 'we have to stand together, all part of one another.' Even Kenyatta used the slogan 'harambee', meaning pull together; everybody was required to pull in the same direction. This had as its political consequence, of course, an acceptance of big leaders which would be often challenged in other societies.

I made several tours to different parts of Tanganyika. I went to the Lake, and I went up to Moshi and Arusha. The area south of Kilimanjaro was very interesting because of its being the heart of the coffee production area. That had been started up by a far-sighted Colonial official called Dundas, later Sir Charles Dundas, who was the District Officer there in the 1920s. He got them organised in co-operatives and set up the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union. Their coffee is still, I think, some of the best on the market. There was also a very interesting habit among the Chagga: they learned to stall their cattle in the woodlands, and then they would go out and bring forage to the cattle instead of allowing the beasts to go out and ravage where they

pleased. They protected the trees. It meant a lot of work, but that was normally done by small children. Both of these were quite far-sighted and unusual agricultural practices, but of course they were only characteristic of that part of the country.

Over near the Lake, you are in the land of cotton, and that was the other enormously powerful economic force in the country. The Co-operative Union which ran the cotton business was the real power in the land. These were all Wasukuma people from the area. Interestingly, “Sukuma” in Swahili means “push.”

I did one very big tour right down to the south. I went down to the land around Iringa where the Hehe tribe are the local force, so to speak; a very interesting place. As I mentioned earlier, I was able to make a detour to see the monument housing the skull of Sultan Mkwawa, which had earlier crossed my desk on its way from post-war Germany, in fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles; but that’s another story. And then I went down to Njombe, on to the Coast and up round a very large chunk of Tanganyika, and I got back to Dar es Salaam just before the rains broke, which was lucky; otherwise I would have been stuck for months south of the river. There was much there because that had been groundnut country, so I went and visited the remains of the groundnut scheme.

MM: Were there things to be seen?

IB: Oh yes! A lot of infrastructure and so forth that had been left, but nothing else. If you regard it as ‘sunk capital’, I suppose it would be churning out something. There were a lot of smallish aid projects that I saw: an irrigation project, and I went to see the wattle trees at Njombe, and there were pine trees at Sao Hill which grew about four times as fast as trees elsewhere in the world; things like that. Bits and pieces, they tended to be. I went to the Mission Station at Peramiho and found that the Swiss had transformed the countryside into a bit of Switzerland, Swiss cows and bells, with its own electricity and other self-contained services, absolutely different from the area around.

We had at that stage a large number of young volunteers who were provided, following the example of the Peace Corps, which had been instigated by Sargent

Shriver, Kennedy's brother-in-law. The Peace Corps were around, but there were other volunteer programmes: the Swiss, the Japanese, everybody seemed to have them. I became very close to the volunteers in the American Friends Service Committee programme, and saw something of their work. We organised about twenty to twenty-two young volunteers through the UN Association, with technical skills of some kind or another, and they were sent out and were supposed to be looked after by the British Council. They were required because Nyerere had decreed that his people were going to have villages. One of his ideas was that the country was not progressing fast enough because Tanganyika did not have village settlements. So he ordered everybody into villages. The Government would build facilities, and the people would build their own homes, but they had to be there. I think development experts agree that this was something of a disaster because, apart from anything else, people had to walk all day to get to the fields which they were going to have to cultivate, and that had effects on production. You didn't get all the benefits of everybody living together that we would characterise as a village with a local post office and a school. But our people were asked to go and help to construct villages. There was a British Commissioner for Village Settlement who sent them hither and thither to help create "model villages" in different regions of the country. I would have to say that one or two of these schemes looked to be not too bad. They had to be based on the local economies. There was a very good wheat scheme in Masailand, and that went quite well, I thought. I saw acres ploughed up by an enthusiastic young guy called Tom Royden who was our volunteer there. And over in the cotton growing area we had another volunteer with whom I'm still very much in touch, George MacPherson, who afterwards became the editor of "Big Farm Weekly", a magazine dealing with farm machinery. But when I went down to the south, I found a couple of guys trying to plant tobacco seedlings in the forest, which didn't seem to me to have much future. I was still more concerned when I found three volunteers out in an area of complete bush, who were trying to construct a village with no villagers, nothing but the lions roaming around at night, one of which I experienced at very close quarters, or thought I did!

MM: They'd gone too far!

IB: Yes. Once they were under the control of the Tanganyika Government, you could not do much about their employment. I passed my concerns to the Commissioner and the British Council. Anyway, they had a very difficult time. No doubt, if they write their memoirs, they will be much more exciting than mine. The trouble is that you don't know in the end if anything really good happened as a result. I was told by a Water Development Engineer in the region that the whole area would be under water every three years. So it was pretty amateur, and I would criticise some of our work in that respect. However, the Village Settlement Commission was under huge political pressure from the top, and no doubt had no time to check with the water people. We were all at the very beginning; we didn't have all this accumulated literature and research work put together by the Overseas Development Institute or the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex. Now we have accumulated forty or fifty years' learnt lessons. We were then doing the learning.

Anyway, that period was coming towards an end when we reached the independence of Kenya and of Zanzibar at the end of 1963. I had to transfer and start up the aid section for the Zanzibar Government. I had been over there once or twice. It was an extraordinary Sinbad the Sailor sort of place before the revolution, I felt. It was sleepy and it seemed to work all right, but everybody was fairly idle. It was rumoured that several senior Civil Servants had little rope-ways going down from their offices so that they could get straight into their boats when they felt that they had done enough work for the day; that sort of thing.

Independence was not celebrated with enormous flags and so forth as I remember; although I wasn't there for the occasion. There were little badges with cloves on them that proclaimed Independence Day. The country ran, maybe runs, on cloves, mostly produced in Pemba Island in the north. You could smell them and see them all laid out to dry; little pink and green flower-buds we know as cloves when they come to us. They also produced coconuts and cattle, and the coconuts of course were practically no trouble. The cloves would be harvested by contract labour, and the poorer people were allowed to graze their cows underneath the trees. The Arab owners didn't have to do anything but sit in the cafés in Zanzibar's old town and wait for the money to come in, especially when prices were high, which they were because there was a huge unsatisfied demand in Indonesia for cloves to flavour tobacco.

The revolution in East Africa, 1964

Early in the morning one day in January 1964, there was a knock on the door from one of my colleagues who announced that a revolution had broken out in Zanzibar, one month after its independence. Whether by design, or more likely by accident, given the atmosphere, somebody had left the Police armoury unlocked and the rifles unlocked within. So the mutineers or the revolutionaries seized these arms and very soon had control of the town. The Sultan had fled in his boat. There was quite a lot of bloodshed. About 200 Arabs were killed on Mangapwani Beach, 20 miles north of the city. I had been there for a pleasant picnic swim only four weeks earlier. We then started to receive refugees. I had an excellent Asian Police Superintendent and another senior officer who had managed to get across and they stayed with me in my flat in Dar es Salaam for a few days and then moved on. The situation in Zanzibar was dominated by a Ugandan adventurer, an Amin type I might call him, Field Marshal (so-called) Okello, who led the forces of the revolution to victory. These forces were led by the Afro-Shirazi Party and by one or two Arabs such as A M Babu (who was afterwards a Tanzanian Minister), but Okello took charge. The trouble with Mr Okello was that he didn't seem to want to go home after the victory. The Tanganyika Government got extremely worried about this. They couldn't do anything about it immediately because, hard on the heels of the Zanzibar revolution and excited by it, we had the army mutiny in Dar es Salaam. There was a week or two of considerable anxiety and activity for us in the British High Commission. I wrote vivid accounts home to my parents, relating what happened blow by blow, but basically I think this was a movement by the soldiery against their own officers, most of whom were British. That was possibly a very large mistake on our part, and the Tanganyika Government later on. Also, of course, they paid no attention to the Government. There were Government Ministers stuck in cars with everybody else and taken to the police station, and then some other person would come along and release them without rhyme or reason at all. President Nyerere, for his own sake, was ushered out of harm's way across the harbour to the area on the other side. But the ferry wasn't working and there was no real way of getting into communication with him. The Government was being run without a President, although Vice-President Kawawa was there, and fairly strong Ministers like Oscar Kambona, the Minister of

Defence. They attempted to pacify the soldiers, but they didn't do anything to persuade them to put down their arms and give up. The risk was that, over in the army barracks, there would be some new idea coming up with somebody saying, 'let's kill all the lawyers!' There was no way in which they could prevent a sergeant or somebody of that rank suddenly taking into his head that they might as well take over the whole government.

Ultimately, with all the indignities that were inflicted on everybody regardless whether they were from East or West, and the looting which took place for a while, and negotiations by Kambona getting nowhere, the Tanganyika Government decided that they had to call in British assistance. We had arranged to have a naval vessel off-shore. When it was first sighted, there was great alarm and tension, so we sent it over the horizon so that they could come in again later if necessary. But we refused to do anything to help the Tanganyika Government unless and until they gave us a written and signed request for military assistance.

MM: I think it was Duncan Sandys who insisted on that.

IB: I think all of us realised that, if we didn't, our help could be termed Colonial aggression. We would have had trouble with the UN and everybody. Stephen Miles, our Acting High Commissioner, took care to keep a copy of Kawawa's hand-written request and we produced it to a Tanzanian Army Historical Enquiry some years later. They did not publish their intended report on what had happened. At one stage, the British High Commission was hosting, not only our own people, but four or five other missions taking refuge because we were in quite a strategic position near the centre of the town and the harbour. When the request was received, the troops came ashore very quickly at dawn, and it was all over in about twenty-five minutes. Meanwhile, mutinies were attempted in Uganda and Kenya, but there was this kind of wave; like the revolutions of 1848 when you think about it, or 1968. In Uganda, British troops flew in at the request of Obote and released British officers taken hostage. In Kenya, Kenyatta's authority soon stamped out the fire. So that was extremely exciting.

The only casualty we suffered, sadly, was my pet banded mongoose, Duzi. (Banded are next size up after “dwarf” mongooses.) I could not leave him in my flat when I had to move into the High Commission, and while I had my eye off him he rashly investigated an electric fan and got a dunt on the head from which he never fully recovered, despite my taking him straight to the vet. However, he managed the somewhat chaotic drive up to Kenya with me and only succumbed there to some unknown illness the following Easter.

MM: Can we move on to your time as consultant on ...

IB: Did you want to hear anything about my job with the East African Community?

MM: Yes indeed! Oh, is that not linked?

Posting as a consultant to the East Africa Common Services Organisation 1964-69

IB: After that, and indeed it had begun a month or two before, I had a request from London to say would I agree to be “Consultant on Administration” as one of a team of three special advisers who were going to help the East African Common Services Organisation. EACSO was set up when Tanganyika became independent and we had to replace the old East Africa High Commission, which I mentioned earlier. It was a sort of interim body to co-ordinate and administer certain East African services. It had, of course, no longer any British Government representatives but the Prime Ministers of the not yet independent countries as well as the one that was independent were members, a kind of amalgam. It was quite obviously a kind of holding stage; what to do next? President Nyerere had said that he would delay Tanganyika’s independence if he could have a federation. But the sort of delay that was needed, partly because of the political problems in Kenya between the different tribal groups and parties, was far too long for him to endure. So there was a big question mark over that. We had always held in London that it made much more sense to have the various Common Services kept together, and a common market, but it was for the East Africans to decide.

A new Secretary General to the Common Services was appointed, instead of the distinguished Ghanaian Yaw Adu, and this was Dunstan Omari who was Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet of President Nyerere. My reaction was this: I don't think that they're going to be very happy to have an ex-British diplomat, ex-Colonial Office coming and working for them, and does Dunstan Omari really guarantee that it would be OK? Omari gave me an interview and he said there would be no problem about that. He had talked to the President. So it was all clear. I said I would very much like to do this job. My private brief was either to bury the East African Common Services Organisation decently or to revive it into something which would work. So that was the task. Off I went to Nairobi three months short of the end of my own original tour, working for the EACSO, and with me were Peter Wand-Tetley who had come from Colonial Service in Nigeria, and I think Austin Jackson was the Financial Adviser. The three of us found plenty to be getting on with when we were there. The first thing I discovered as "consultant on administration" was that the place was run by civil servants. There were Dunstan Omari, the Secretary General; then there was the Legal Secretary, who was a Ghanaian, Akiwumi, a very smart man; the Financial Secretary, John Hinchey, was an old-fashioned Australian I think – might be British – a figure of righteousness, quite a prickly man but OK. There were the three of them and then were others like the East African Supreme Court. Below them were rafts of civil servants.

What was obvious was that nothing was happening on the East African front and we would have to wait and do other things. So I looked around and found a variety of jobs that one could do. First thing, as I say, I found that, although I had been appointed Consultant on Administration by the Secretary General, there was another administrative consultant who had been appointed by the Financial Secretary. The two had evidently not known about this, and I don't think that they understood that my role might be secretly rather different from his anyway. But you negotiate that sort of thing and I did a number of jobs. We did some jobs together, like should we alter the hours of work because of the traffic problems, that sort of stuff. I eventually organised an assistant to come and help over the complete reorganisation of the Registry system. We spent some happy hours reassigning files for the Marine Research body or whatever it was. But we had to keep going. There were a number

of things that came up to keep me busy. But it wasn't until things got very serious between the three East African countries that they decided that they had to have a proper Commission to negotiate. This would be in 1965, a year after I got there. This Commission arose partly because of industrial licensing problems. They had allocated an electric light bulb factory to Arusha, which was completely ridiculous. And then batteries were to be made somewhere else. It was quite ludicrous. Everybody was about to impose quantitative restrictions on imports from other member states. Everybody wanted restrictions on everybody else's produce. Now tariffs are one thing but if somebody says, right 2,000 tons of batteries and that's your lot! a common market cannot possibly work and the whole thing will all break down. They could see that coming.

It's worth spelling out briefly what had to be dealt with. East Africa had three problem areas – the common market and currency; the common services; and their institutional and political control.

Within the common external tariff, Kenya sold far more to the other two than it bought, and Uganda more to Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika). So investors mostly went to Kenya, increasing the imbalance. In 1965 the poorer-off began to slap quantitative restrictions on the better-off, to protect their own nascent industries. It was obvious this would kill the market stone dead. The other weapon then used was direction of investors through industrial licensing, which I've mentioned.

On the services side, all the main services had their HQs in Kenya – Uganda had never had a separate Post Office or Railways – but the profits made in Kenya and Uganda subsidised unprofitable services elsewhere, especially in Tanzania. The Airways had a special advantage because the three countries operated as one in negotiating landing rights with more powerful IATA members. Still, Tanzania especially felt that its airports and landing slots were neglected in the common deals.

The institutional problem was that there were no political instruments to defend the all-East Africa bodies. They were run by civil service managers reporting straight to the three heads of Government. The all-nominated legislature was quite ineffectual in any row between the three countries.

Tanganyika had already decided to break up the common currency, despite Nyerere's enthusiasm for federation. John Loynes, Secretary to the Currency Board, had told him, "You can have a common currency without a federation, but you can't have a federation without a common currency." One to remember, as the debates on the EU and the euro continue here!

In 1965 and early 1966, however, the prospects for any East African organisation looked very bleak. Not only was there an increase in protective trade measures, but behind the curtain loomed two events, both linked to the problems in the Congo.

The first was that unknown to us at the time (and even unknown, at the start, to Nyerere), Che Guevara had arrived in the eastern Congo to help the so-called "revolutionary troops" to fight Tshombe's mercenary army in Katanga. The Cuban force could not get to its destination on the far side of Lake Kivu without the active help of the Tanzanians and a base in their lake-side town of Kigoma. Che has described ("The African Dream") his progressive disillusionment over the failure of his Congolese allies and their leaders to help fight an effective campaign, while the other side were led by white South African mercenaries. He had expected to "Cubanise" the Congolese, "but the effect", he said, "was the exact opposite, leading to the "Congolisation" of the Cubans ...". At the end of 1965, however, the OAU pulled the plug on this proxy war by ruling that all foreign forces should leave, and the Tanzanians complied by withdrawing their help for Che, who had to leave with all his troops.

The other event, a few months later, was potentially disastrous. A column of lorries, heading for Uganda and led by a junior Tanzanian army officer, tried to cross through Kenya on the East side of Lake Victoria, and were promptly arrested by the Kenya Police when it was discovered that these lorries contained arms. The fat was really in the fire. By this time, Kenyatta and the Luo leader Oginga Odinga were at daggers drawn, and nothing could have been worse than a possible delivery of a shipment of arms to the Opposition's homeland. The otherwise powerless East Africa Legislative Assembly rallied to demand the release of the convoy. Eventually, the Kenyans let the Tanzanians go and made them take the westerly route out of the country. The

whistle was blown on all this by a Ugandan Opposition MP, Daudi Ocheng of the Kabaka's party, who was dying of cancer. With nothing to lose, he accused Obote, Nekyon and others, including Amin, of smuggling these arms to the rebels in the Congo in exchange for ivory and gold. As Uganda was supposed to be on friendly terms with the new Congo Government of Mobutu, the effects could not be worse. A group of five Ministers from southern Uganda, and the Kabaka, were believed to be about to get rid of Obote. But the latter struck first, dismissing and detaining them, and later forcing the Kabaka to flee the country, after a bloody battle for his stormed palace. He died three years later in exile in London. The constitution was changed and Obote reasserted his power. The army commander was arrested, the Ugandan monarchies all abolished, and even John Okello, the Zanzibar revolutionary, was detained.

In these circumstances it was remarkable that anything could be done on EACSO, but despite the turmoil the three heads of government now finally decided that they were going to have this negotiating Commission, with three Ministers each and an independent chairman. They invited the UN to provide the Chairman and his advisers. The Chairman was Professor Kjeld Philip from Denmark, who had been Minister of Finance and of something else – a lovely old boy with a lot of patience and quite a bit of cunning. Then they had a raft of advisers on different subjects, and I myself suggested to the Secretary General of EACSO where to get some of these people. For instance, we needed somebody to advise on the railways and harbours, so I got the World Bank and they provided a former General Manager of East African Railways and Harbours, Sir Gordon Mackay, who was working for the Bank. He came along. Then on education and so on we had Guy Hunter, who was a wonderful person; I'd always had a lot of time for him. We had somebody who became Minister of Agriculture in Costa Rica, Carlos Castillo. We had a man called Rajan Bhatia from the IMF to advise on the currency. Most important on the Common Market side, they had someone from UNIDO, a Swede called Nils Ramm-Ericsson, who was about my age and who was prepared to do all the leg work on the economic side.

I wasn't anything! I was on the outside, except that I was the adviser to the Secretary General. The Presidents decided first that all the bodies, the three Governments and the EACSO, all put in papers, so I made sure that our paper was about four times as

solid and substantial and well argued as anybody else's. It made a clear case for continuing everything and also made the case for political changes, like having East African Ministers, things I could see were badly needed to make it work. So I think they were quite struck by that and then, of course, we had the advice of all the Services like Customs and what have you.

The position papers were there and then I had to watch in frustration as the Commission started up. Now the UN always had eminent experts but they had also procured a secretary from the UN, and the secretary was Joe Mensah, who was Executive Secretary of the ECA (Economic Commission for Africa) in Addis Ababa, later Ghana's Finance Minister. So off they went for their first meeting, and I heard from the Secretary General what had happened. But then absolutely no Minutes were produced, or the Secretary General struggled to produce Minutes. Then they had a second meeting and Mensah didn't turn up, I think. It turned out that he had had a big argument with Kjeld Philip about his role. He thought this was to write all the think papers, and he wasn't going to be bothered with the administrative tasks of collating and following up and all the rest of it; that was too lowly for him and he had other things to do. So he beetled off back to Addis Ababa and never returned.

One reason for Mensah pulling out might be that his Economic Commission for Africa was touting a form of integration tried out already in Latin America – integration of particular industries across borders. None of us thought this model workable, or any good, in East African circumstances.

So we were left without any support staff. Philip was struggling by himself and coming in and out every few months. Honestly it didn't work. I thought this was my opportunity, so I went up to see Philip at his hotel after a third inconclusive meeting when he was back in Nairobi and I said, "Look, obviously it's not going to work like this but I am here and I am available for you to use. What I suggest is that you tell the Presidents – don't ask for a new Secretary because that won't work – just tell them you need a personal assistant, and then I will be your PA and I will make sure that everything is followed up." He played it like that, and of course they couldn't deny him a personal assistant. They would certainly have rebelled if they'd thought they had to kick Mensah in the teeth. So they never had a Secretary. I acted as Secretary

in effect, doing the negotiations after meetings numbers four to twelve, and ensured the Minutes were written the next day and approved by Kjeld Philip before he went home on the plane after each meeting. They were in Kampala, they were here, they were there. I held follow-up meetings between all the officials to see how they should carry forward this and that. I held preparatory meetings with the officials before their Ministers met again, so that they had something positive to work on. Meanwhile, the Swede, Nils Ramm-Ericsson, followed up all the detailed stuff about customs duties and transfer taxes and any ideas that were in the Treaty, and so gradually the thing began to take shape in our minds.

We got to summer 1966, and then we had a report of about forty paragraphs, but it contained three disagreements. So then the question was what to do because these were quite difficult decisions, obviously capable of being negotiated but the public was beginning to clamour about what the result of the Philip Commission was. Eventually the three Presidents met in Dar es Salaam. I said to Kjeld Philip that we had to go down together, and he must say to them that there is enough here for us now to turn this material into a proper Treaty. This is only the summary of the stuff. We need the whole thing turned into a Treaty, and we'll sort out the remaining problems before the end. And so he got the authority for us to begin drafting, effectively, on the basis of the report, and to keep the other matters going. At that stage, I got HMG to send me back the Legal Secretary who had retired before the Commission started, because I knew that he knew everything about every single piece of East African legislation. John Hooton came out, and he did the drafting job. That's what made the difference. There are too many reports all over the place, which never get translated into action. This carried it forward right to the last moment, and the whole process took another year, or a bit under, because we had to wait a while until the Heads of Government had agreed this. It went on and on until we finally got to Kampala in June 1967, and there were three or four things outstanding. But I had a very resourceful team with a splendid West Indian secretary, who was excellent.

The answers to the problems I mentioned earlier were simple but they took a lot of working out. On the Common Market, no more QRs, but instead the two poorer countries could slap a "transfer tax" or internal tariff, up to half the external tariff, on goods from the better-off. And no more direction of industrial investors, but an EA

Development Bank, to invest preferentially in Tanzania and Uganda over Kenya. The Charter for this was done by Grahame Keep, an Australian well acquainted with the new Asian Development Bank. On the Common Services, we split Railways from Harbours and relocated their HQs so that each country had two. Uganda got the Post Office and Development Bank, Tanzania the Community HQ and Harbours, and Kenya the Railways and Airways. The top posts were shared out to avoid their nationals having control. This solution was far better than decentralisation, which would quickly have led to disintegration. Everyone had an interest in keeping the Services which they hosted “common”. On the institutions, my idea of East African Ministers prevailed. Each President chose one, and they were not allowed to belong to their national government. Instead, they had to work together as a triumvirate and each chaired two Ministerial Councils, in which the three countries also took part. They could be sacked by their sponsor, but there was an incentive to put in good people, to preserve the national interest as far as they could.

I thought myself that this set-up was a distinct improvement on the “mandarin” composition of the EEC, with its Commission and Council of Ministers. A pity it was broken by Amin’s arrival in Uganda.

Some problems arose over things like the East African Development Bank (which is still going because, although the Community collapsed, we were far-sighted enough to make its Charter separate, attached as an Annex, so that it could be detached). The issue was what percentage of their investment should go in Uganda and Tanzania, which were less industrially developed than Kenya. Finally they agreed on an extraordinary figure like 38³/₄% for each, leaving 22¹/₂% for Kenya which was completely absurd; but anyway we had to have compromises like that at the end. At the very end there was a problem because the Ugandans wanted an assurance that Kenya would buy their sugar, and so a secret Protocol was devised by John Hooton behind the scenes, and he wrote this thing out and had it typed up and presented it to be signed at the last moment. The deed was effectively done; they all signed up. I have to say, at the end, that of all the three teams, the Ugandans impressed me most, although they had to give in on a number of points at the end. It was decided to distribute the headquarters around rather than splitting them up into regional and central units. I said to the Chairman, “Obviously we cannot, politically, leave all the

corporations operating from Kenya. If they decentralise, the regions will inevitably soon turn into “national” services and the central systems will break down. We must instead relocate the HQ.”

The Ugandans seemed to operate on quite a narrow brief. They were allowed to agree to more or less anything, in my view, by President Obote, provided that they didn't agree to a Federation. He didn't want the whole thing broken up, because then Uganda, being land-locked, would be at the mercy of Kenya and Tanganyika. He didn't want a Federation, because Uganda would be the junior partner. He wanted something in between, and so long as we did that, he was happy. They sent one Minister to the negotiations and only one official sometimes. He was an extremely clever man and a very nice person. I suspect that he was killed during the Amin regime. The Kenyans and Tanzanians, on the other hand, arrived with fleets of American advisers, professor this and professor that, and British economists, all intended to boost and bolster their arguments. It was quite interesting to see that self-confidence on the part of the Ugandans.

I ought to have mentioned in relation to Tanzania that it was of course now Tanzania. In April 1964, I think it was, two or three months after the Zanzibar revolution, the Tanganyikans decided that they could not leave Zanzibar separate and prey to people like “Brigadier” Okello. So they went over there and manoeuvred a union and that kept Okello out, but it also led to some continuing problems in what is now Tanzania, even now. Although they had at one stage a President who was from Zanzibar, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, I think that worked out pretty well for them in the end. But the leader of the Afro-Shirazi Party, Karume, was bad for Zanzibar, and for instance the Shirazis as well as the Arabs suffered badly under his rule.

Anyway the Treaty was done and signed on 5 June 1967. We had acres of publicity and Swahili versions and stuff like that, but there was hardly anything the next day on the international news because of the Six Day War which started on 6 June 1967. All news other than what was going on in Israel and Egypt was completely blotted out. But anyway, we had done our stuff. However, it had to be brought into force, so there was then a pause. I had done my bit, but the Treaty was not yet in force. It was agreed by the Presidents that they would fix implementation for December. I got

Hooton to write all the implementing laws and instruments and notices and everything, most of which he was able to produce at a drop of a hat. He was very good.

Before that, I had to cope with the imperial ambitions of the staff of Common Services, all of whom saw their fortunes made as they were elevated into Permanent Secretaries under the new structure. I thought there was only one way to stop this because I'm no longer officially here. So I rang up Christopher Musoke in Uganda, he was the contact, and said to him, "Look, you know that I'm due to go home now and finish my job, but you ought to know that it's not clear who's going to be the Secretary to the Implementation Committee. You risk getting this sort of proposal. If your Minister wants me, I think HMG would agree to an extension of a few months, but I cannot help you." So next thing I knew was that Lawrence Kalule-Settala, the Minister, had gone at once to the other Ministers chosen to supervise implementation, and there was no question but that they wanted me to do it. So that squashed on the head all the would-be Permanent Secretaries, though they kindly seemed to bear me no grudge. We worked up instead a sensible and practical model which the Ministers could agree and which left the Secretary-General running a kind of Cabinet Office.

MM: Just as well.

IB: So on 1 December, we had the whole thing signed and sealed in Arusha. The Emperor of Ethiopia, and the President of Somalia were present at the ceremony ...

MM: Were they signatories?

IB: No, but Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia and Zambia, the whole lot, put in requests the same day for Acts of Association. We had a last minute legal hitch in that the clever but erratic Attorney General to Nyerere, Roland Brown, turned up. He had been on leave of absence in Zambia. He was a very clever, leftwing lawyer, and he'd been lent to Kaunda to deal with mine labour problems. He had negotiated a huge pay rise (22%) for the miners, and it had taken him months and he'd been out of the way, which was very lucky for me. He came back at the last moment and saw one or two of the legal notices we had put up for approval, like guaranteeing of freedom of

movement for Community workers from one country to the other. He objected, and I thought Nyerere was going to stop this process in its tracks. I got really panicky but Hooton explained in very gentle tones to the Presidents that “this notice didn’t do anything special. You know how.” Roland was overruled, much to his fury, and the whole thing went through. But it was an excellent example to me, as a negotiator, of when to speak and when not to, and how. Hooton did that very well.

So then we had to decide what to do about these association requests. So the next thing was would I please stay to be the Secretary to negotiations with the surrounding countries. I thought that this was getting a bit much but, on the other hand, once you’ve started, you should be prepared to finish. So it was agreed by London that I would start this up from Arusha, not Nairobi, and have an African assistant, who would take over when I left, Frank Mwanjisi. I would leave, then, after a year and go back to the Overseas Development Ministry (as it now was). It was a bit of a frustrating year, because I didn’t think things would move very fast. But what was extremely interesting was this: we had to find out what they wanted out of the Association. Burundi wanted access to their special port facilities in Dar es Salaam; Somalia didn’t know; Ethiopia hadn’t quite decided; Zambia had some special considerations like the Chinese-built Zambia/Tanzania Railway, and probable trade interests. We did the background notes on the countries, as far as we could find any information about them. Then we tried to assess our own East African interests, against those of the other applicants. We had three lots of East African government officials sitting side by side considering their interests against Ethiopia or Zambia, and I thought to myself it seemed extraordinary that they were all sitting round saying no, we cannot have this or that. There was no contention between them at all. It showed me how much they had in common, as opposed to how many issues they had argued about between them before the Treaty.

So those negotiations proceeded hardly at all. I remember one with Burundi, when their Ambassador to Dar es Salaam attended and led their delegation, or spoke for their delegation. None of my team could speak French, except me, and the other side couldn’t speak Swahili or English. So I had to translate our statements into French and then Ambassador Proteas Mangona had to translate this into Kinyarwanda. Then their views came to me via Mangona in French and I had to tell my people on the East

African side what he had said. You can see the practical difficulties of all-Africa co-operation.

We had about one round with each country or so, and then it was time for me to go home. The Community itself worked very well for about five years, but the association negotiations came to nothing eventually. The weakest provision in the Treaty was that there were no effective arrangements for currency co-ordination, just arrangements for mutual credits that did not work very well after 1973, when the US dollar went off the gold standard. So it wouldn't have gone on all that long, but it was General Idi Amin and his arrival which killed off the Community. When Amin took over, Nyerere refused to meet him. He was anyway giving safe haven to ex-President Obote. The whole thing was structured, as is the EU, so that the toughest problems got referred right up to the top or, in this case, for the Presidents to settle as the East African Authority. When they never met, those problems got heavier and heavier and eventually the whole thing broke down. It was a very great shame, because it was the only workable instance I can find of true international co-operation, which is not a Federation, not even going as far as the European Community, but with some special features. I was particularly proud of the East African Ministers. They were appointed, one by each Head of State, but their functions were solely to run the institution, the Community. Each minister had departmental responsibilities, and they also had to chair the specialised Ministerial Councils, which included Ministers from all three countries and dealt with subjects like the Common Market, and get them together when necessary. It was their business to defend East African interests against the various national interests. I thought this was going to work out. This was something that we had not had before, when the general East African interest always came last.

All three Presidents appointed good quality people to be East African ministers – there was an incentive for this, to ensure proper reflection of political imperatives in the home country. One who came in later, Robert Ouko from Kenya, used to come up to me when we met on my subsequent journeys to Africa, and introduce me as “this is the man who found me a ministerial job!” Ouko later became President Moi's Foreign Minister, and was highly respected among Western diplomats, but he was murdered, by being thrown out of a plane or helicopter, after incautiously giving

substance to criticisms of corruption in Moi's regime, when on a visit to the USA with the President and other Ministers. The finger pointed strongly to one or more of Moi's less savoury associates, but inevitably the truth never came out.

In my Will I am leaving all my papers on the negotiations, including the Verbatim Records, to Rhodes House at Oxford.

Social life in Kenya in the 1960s

I was very pleased to be living in Nairobi again, and it was so encouraging to find how fast the social atmosphere was being transformed since a decade earlier. A great new harvest from the secondary schools, University, and overseas training and scholarships, which we had helped to finance, was growing up, and inter-racial social contacts were becoming everyday. For the last three years or so of the 1960s I was organist and choirmaster at St Andrew's Nairobi, and managed to change the composition of our choir over time until at least a third were African (as was my own successor). My good friend and first (and sometimes only) tenor, Gideon, happily volunteered to be the only African gipsy in a famed production of the "The Gipsy Baron" at the National Theatre – though the Baron himself was in fact an African-American soul singer. I got to meet Elimu and Rebecca Njau, the first a remarkable painter and his wife a playwright. An Arab friend of mine took me to Lamu and introduced me to his family and to the strangely subtle and unfamiliar society in that remarkable town. I was able to take several African friends to see their own countryside, including some game parks. Everywhere, despite setbacks, there seemed to be the growth of hope, especially after independence. The only exception seemed to be in the Northern Frontier District, where "shifta" gangs made travel very unsafe unless you went in convoy.

Just before I left Kenya, an incident took place which made me realise how rapidly things were changing. An audacious raid by a gang on the Maternity Hospital in Pumwani, a poor area of Nairobi, netted the criminals a large sum of cash. But the police, with great efficiency, quickly ran the gang to ground in the Karura forest south west of Nairobi, and all of them were arrested. However, little of the money was recovered. The reason for this became plain when, in court, the defendants pleaded

that the police had taken every note from their haul for themselves, leaving only the coins to be returned to the hospital. This was obviously the truth. The standards so rigorously advanced fifteen years earlier by the Police Commission had now vanished for ever. Sorry for this diversion, but it is instructive, I think.

Head of International and General Department of the ODM 1969-73

MM: No need to apologise for that extremely interesting account! After that, you came back as Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Overseas Development.

IB: Yes. Upon my return I knew I would have to undergo “positive vetting”, a security system set up while I had been abroad. I had to choose whether to disclose my variant sexual orientation, and decided to do so whatever the consequences; it could have ended my career. What happened, how I survived, and the work I subsequently did to get policy in that area utterly reversed, are dealt with in a separate note, available to the public, which I have deposited with all my papers in the London School of Economics’s Hall-Carpenter archives of gay and lesbian history, and I am attaching a copy to this record.

MM: Did you suffer in any way as a result of being openly gay?

IB: Once Geoffrey Wilson, my Permanent Secretary, had agreed to my PV clearance, for some years, not at all. When I got within range of possible promotion to Under-Secretary, I demanded an assurance that I would not be more rigorously tested or discriminated in any way against other possible candidates. This caused a flurry, because Grade 3 was a common inter-departmental grade and in theory you could be posted anywhere in Whitehall. Finally I was given my assurance, with a note that it was *ad personam*, and did not represent a general policy. However, everyone knows about swallows and summer!

I was eventually promoted to look after the main multilateral aid Division in 1976. Four years later, as a result of civil service cuts, I also took on the UN Division, and that included relations with UNESCO, which were pretty sticky. It was intended to make me Ambassador, with Veronica Beckett in Paris as our representative on the

spot. However the powers that be took fright at the possible publicity consequences of my being summoned to the Palace to kiss hands, so they changed the arrangements, and I lost the title (which you keep among European colleagues for life) while still getting the responsibilities.

This was my only experience of discrimination. On the other hand, when my life partner was drowned in 1988, on holiday in Pakistan, I could not have had more sympathetic or practical help than was then given me to enable me to recover his body.

Going back to 1970 after I had been cleared, I was given the International and General Department to look after. This work had three main elements. First came the World Bank group, and to that I was able to get added “common aspects of the Regional Development Banks”, which had hitherto been dealt with by the relevant geographical Departments. While the individual loans of each bank had to be scrutinised and briefed upon by the geographers, there were common issues of policy which we had rather neglected, such as how each should maintain the value of their assets now that the US had gone off the gold standard, what criteria should govern the replenishment of their soft funds, and so on. I shall say more about these banks and their soft funds later when I talk about my later stints on the International side as Under-Secretary.

The two main pieces of work on this side at that time were the negotiations for the Second Replenishment of IDA, the World Bank soft arm, and the creation of the African Development Fund. Geoffrey Wilson, our Permanent Secretary, himself led for Britain in the IDA negotiations, given the size of our contributions (we were then second only to the USA) and the interest of the Treasury in the Group as a whole. I went along in support, and learnt a lot from him. We had a single Director in Washington for both the Bank Group and the IMF, but we managed to arrange for the Alternate Director in the Bank to be from the ODM, while the similar IMF post was always filled by someone from the Bank of England.

On the African Development Fund I handled matters alone. Because the African Development Bank could not then open its membership to any non-African countries – that was changed in the late ‘80s – we devised a 50/50 partnership, in which the

Bank as a unit held half the shares and provided six directors (who had to vote together), and the non-African donors took the other half of the votes and directorships. We had of course to share these (except for the USA) with other countries. We teamed up regularly with the Germans, and always had very good relations with them in all the Regional Banks. The negotiations were run by the Bank President, M. Labidi; at that stage the Bank was sited in North Africa, as it again now is because operating from Abidjan, as it did for many years, became impossible following civil strife there. In exchange for its half-share, the Bank provided small amounts to the Fund from its own profits, but nearly all the resources in fact came from the usual donors. These included some oil-rich States, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. (By contrast, they did not belong to the Inter-American Bank, of which Israel had become a non-regional member.)

The whole rationale for the non-regionals in getting this fund set up was that most African countries, then as now, could not afford to take the Bank's investments on market terms, and we wanted to offer a collective effort of solidarity, especially to attract some donors who had no or virtually no bilateral aid to Africa. The soft fund, fed by our promised contributions which usually covered three years' commitments, allowed the poorest countries to get some money from their own institution at very low cost. We expected these loans, soft or hard, to be properly analysed and vetted by Bank staff. Part of the eventual Fund was set aside for technical aid, given as grants, and we had to concede that this money could also be used by the better-off countries. But, thanks to Norwegian stubbornness, we managed at the last moment to get in a requirement that this T.A. must go "predominantly" to the poorer members.

One feature of this and the other multilateral Banks was that if you fell behind with any loan, hard or soft, you were in default and could get no other help until the loans were paid up. Eventually the '90s debt crisis in Africa led to most countries being in default to the AfDB, and so the British Government agreed to repay to the Bank and AfDF the money by which they were in default, as part of the general debt relief scheme.

The other two areas I dealt with were the impending British entry into the EEC and the Development Assistance Committee in Paris. This last included "peer reviews" under which each donor was scrutinised and questioned by two others on their aid

performance and policies, on the basis of analysis by the excellent Secretariat. The DAC developed a very important set of common standards – for instance on what really constituted “aid”, and on its terms, and it was, in a way, the “conscience of the rich”. Most of the work was attended there by our representative on the spot, while our own aid effort was decided and defended by the Aid Policy Department; but other issues fell to my side.

MM: Did you have any problems with Europe?

IB: At the stage at which the Treaty came into effect, 1 January 1973, we had one or two special problems, which we needed to attend to. Protocol 22 in particular provided for the equal partnership, or association, of ex-colonial territories that were British on the same lines as those that had been French or other European. There were three options. The first was full association under Part IV of the Rome Treaty and the Yaounde Convention; the next one was other types of association, and then there was a third kind that was only a “co-operation” agreement. Our aim was to get all the former British territories to go for option one, because naturally enough we wanted to be sure that the Commonwealth countries dominated the other side and that they got the lion’s share of the European Development Fund, to which we had now to contribute. The size and phasing of these contributions, and the EDF’s policy directions and management, were extremely important for the whole Aid Programme. The problem here was Nigeria, which was obviously large and important, and very reluctant, for reasons of pride, even to be put into the same bed as the Côte d’Ivoire. I remember we had a meeting at Selsdon Manor Hotel. I attended along with people including the Nigerians, and Chief Emeka Anyaoku from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Emeka was a Nigerian, and he argued very forcibly and convincingly that Nigeria would be missing an opportunity to help unite Africa, and to lead the whole African/Caribbean/Pacific group and would be stupid to give up the possibility of benefits. They could benefit from trade and aid concessions and really there was nothing that they were being asked to give the EEC in return. This meeting had a very positive influence on the Nigerian decision.

That was one of our main concerns. The others were in connection with the products, particularly the arrangements for cane sugar and for bananas. Those are two which

still run and run. The special regime protecting ACP bananas, of course, has died the death now, and the sugar protocol is on the way out because of World Trade Organisation rules. It was very much in doubt at that stage how it would all pan out because Geoffrey Rippon, who negotiated British accession to the EEC, got only a very general assurance from the French, an '*aura à cœur*', on behalf of the sugar producing former British territories. Harold Wilson very rightly made that one of his conditions for renegotiation. "We must have an assurance in specific terms." He secured a jolly good deal for the sugar producers in the ex-colonial world, plus of course for Tate and Lyle. Mauritius and Fiji were two big sugar producers, but the point about those two is that they could compete to some extent on the world market. As you probably know, the world market for sugar was largely tied up, since the Russians took the Cuban product and the Americans had arrangements with the Philippines. The UK supply was met from Commonwealth imported sugar cane and the EEC had separate sources of sugar from beet grown with massive protection by huge farms in Belgium and France. So there was hardly any other world sugar; everything else was tied up and the residual prices fluctuated wildly.

Whatever it was, Mauritius and Fiji always produced beyond their quotas for the EEC and the EEC could always argue that that was done on the basis of knowing that they could sell those quotas at a decent price. But others, like Guyana, were high-cost producers, and they needed to sell guaranteed quantities, at a good guaranteed price, to the EEC. I remember discussing this matter with our economists, who said it was much better not to pay them a subsidy of £60 a ton (or whatever the argument was about at that stage), but to give it to them in aid. But I said this was not correct, because the aid would go to the governments, and there was no guarantee that it would benefit the right people. The only way we could secure the estates and the employment and so forth was by buying the sugar itself. I did not want to be deprived of my Demerara and my soft brown sugar, which was what would have happened if we had had to rely on beet sugar from the Continental EEC.

So we were distant witnesses to the clash between what you might call the armed knights from the two main interests. These were the 'betteraviers' of France and Belgium, their pockets bulging with cash from the subsidies they were getting out of the Common Agricultural Policy, and the 'Grands Blancs', from particularly

Mauritius – people like Guy Sauzier, who was a local sugar baron. We came off all right on that. The cane sugar producers got a price related to the beet price, allowing for conversion factors, and the UK was allowed to import a decent quantity of sugar cane from the ACP producers (1,463,000 tonnes a year). But that was a bit later in the 1970s because we didn't get that through until after the renegotiation. Those were the concerns on the EEC side for us.

I mentioned earlier that we got on very well with our German counterparts in the BMZ. Dick King, the Permanent Secretary, and I went over for bilateral exchanges with them in, I think, February 1971. At the last moment I heard that the day chosen was a special pre-Carnival festival in Bonn at which women took charge, and enjoyed accosting any man and snipping off his tie as a trophy. I took the precaution of choosing one of my less-regarded ties, and tied it wrong way round. Our talks, on the second floor, were accompanied by a growing buzz from some event downstairs. “Moehmentag” was getting under way. Sure enough, as we descended to the first floor we were confronted by a seething mass of secretaries, accountants and other officials, all women, armed with large scissors, who swept us onto the improvised dance floor, and refused to release us until they had deprived us of most of our ties. I thought this sacrifice worth while for the new picture it gave me of German traditions and character! My tie was still just wearable, but very, very short.

Then I went on to South Asia Department and was in charge of that for three years.

Head of South Asia Department of the Overseas Development Administration, 1973-76)

MM: The South Asia Department of the ODA?

IB: Yes, and that meant India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. I didn't have Sri Lanka but I had Bhutan, but that wasn't anything at all really. India's problems were diagnosed as a lack of foreign exchange, so we were not allowed – as we do now – to pick up projects for agriculture, education and so on as these were paid for in rupees. We had to provide so-called “programme aid” for miscellaneous British exports with a development character, and aid for large usually high-tech projects, like fertiliser

factories, which needed British know-how and machinery. Given our own development priorities, especially for rural and poverty problems, this was rather frustrating. However, one excellent scheme was centred around nation-wide dairy development through cooperatives. India would usually be the main interest but the main problems at the time were the results of the war of independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan, which had just been completed. We had an absolutely chaotic Bangladesh Government. Everybody wanted to assist this very poor country, but it was extremely difficult to do so in a sensible way. Apart from that, we had indulged in, to my mind, completely ridiculous relief offers: for instance, helicopters which never worked properly – I blame Douglas-Home personally for insisting on that. It was said the Bangladeshis must have helicopters. The helicopters we sent were grounded nearly all the time, and cost us a mint, whereas the Russians and the others were flying up and down quite happily in much smaller ones. My unfortunate Principal on Bangladesh had a file going up to Part Z at least, dealing with these wretched machines.

One of the main problems was very cleverly solved by a colleague – I think he's still out there, David Stanton in the Department for International Development (DFID), but he may have retired by now. That was the problem of how to divide responsibility for the aid debt that had been incurred by Pakistan in respect of what had then become two countries. As they would not talk to each other, it was very difficult to see how to do this. Obviously we started with 'Project Aid'. One could more or less trace projects. For example, debt owed in respect of a bridge in what was then Bangladesh belonged to them. The figures all had to be reconciled, though. I was very glad I had somebody so good to deal with this. David flitted to and fro and I can remember at one stage Mr Ali in the Treasury in Dhaka saying to him, "Our figures are correct. You go and see Mr Ahmed in Lahore. Tell him to look in file number so-and-so!" And sure enough, when he went over there, there it was! So, if they'd only been able to contact each other directly much difficulty would have been avoided. In the end the whole thing got sorted out and a great agreement was signed, and I think Pakistan took all the programme aid debt. Without that, we couldn't resume any assistance to Pakistan either. We wanted to get on with that too.

I had one project mission in Bangladesh and I found that one of the most frustrating places that I had ever been in. Nothing was ever what it was said to be. The one good project which we could see had been worked out by British irrigation engineers. It involved putting bunds round a sort of island and then pumping water in and out according to the highs and lows of the river. Then it came to nothing because we realised that the channel of the Brahmaputra was moving. This island would not be able to survive, and there was not much use putting machinery in there at vast expense in order to turn it into a rice field for a very short period.

One thing I did get done was to organise with the local World Bank representative, David Dunn, a system of local donor co-ordination. We got everybody together and asked, for example, who was being asked to deal with low-level pumps, and by whom? They put hands up, and the co-ordinating group decided a) what we were all going to do and where, and b) what we were really trying to do in terms of production because typically, in all three countries, it was the engineers that ran the show, typically in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and agriculturists were nowhere. In Pakistan they had people in WAPDA (the Water and Power Development Agency) and that was a Federal body. Agriculture was a provincial responsibility, so the power engineers always got their way, and it had been the same since the War. But, economically speaking, these aid-supported investments depended on increased production, especially of rice and wheat, to be viable.

So there were very many difficulties which we tried to deal with and I had to pull the plug on the project at Belkuchi. I was really very upset about it because it looked to be one good thing in Bangladesh. There were other things; the one I liked best in some ways was rehabilitation of some of the jute mills, with spare parts. You couldn't just send the parts out there; you had to make sure they were going to be installed. I recall, because I'm a Dundonian, Dundee being the home of jute in the old days, that we were able to recruit a not-too-elderly Dundonian who had spent nearly all his life in mills in what was now Bangladesh. I thought this was the man we must hire at once and attach him as a technician to the aid project. And I think it went quite well. Bangladesh has taken off pretty well since then. They have increased their food production very well despite the population rise, and they have benefited tremendously from something I did have a hand in later, which was getting special

trade concessions out of the GATT Multi-Fibre Arrangement on textiles for the least developed countries, something we got the DTI and other Departments to agree to support in the negotiations. Now when the other parties agreed to the least developed countries having tariff-free and duty-free access for their textile products, I'm sure none of them thought that Bangladesh would emerge as a major producer. They all remembered the small places and thought they were the least developed. Bangladesh got going and the garment industry sprang up. It was too expensive any longer to make clothes in Korea or Thailand. Investors moved along to Bangladesh. It was a marvellous industry because it employed women, so they got out of the home for the first time and there weren't any men around, and they got some money and the rest of us got the clothes. Until recently, of course, because the abolition of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement under global WTO rules means that they are being wiped out by the Chinese. And so it goes on.

Anyway, there were things like that, bits here and there you could do, and then in Pakistan I led a project identification mission and I had to look for something for each of the four provinces. I must say I found it very difficult to pick anything in Baluchistan. In fact I had an Engineering Adviser with me and this fishing port came up, Gwadar, and so I asked him to go and have a look at it. When he came back, I took a look at the map and observed that this port was right on the heroin route. They were probably exporting the stuff that way. The project did not make any sense. They wanted a huge new ice factory, but they already had one and it wasn't working properly. They wanted the port for deep-sea trawlers when it was the near-sea fishermen we wanted to encourage. It was obvious to me that they had put this project forward for the wrong reasons. In those days, the heroin was not processed in Afghanistan or Pakistan but in the Middle East somewhere. I thought, "I'm not having that one!" There were however some good projects for land levelling and desalination in Sind, and for repairs to the Sukkur Barrage across the Indus. I wanted to get that approved, as my parents had been at the opening of the Barrage forty years earlier.

The third example was very interesting. I went with a Parliamentary Select Committee on Overseas Development to have a look at, and take evidence from, our people and others in the Sub-Continent, and this did include Nepal, which was not in

my bailiwick really. I had to help to provide the answers to the witnesses in the High Commissions, or whoever was being quizzed. That meant, of course, trying to find out what the questions were likely to be. Select Committees work by having somebody to help them, a clerk and advisers. It happened that the Clerk, Peter Ricketts, had been in the Kenya government and I knew him from there. The Adviser, Rob Wood, an economist, was not only a friend of my family's near Fleet, but he'd been to Oxford a year or two after me and had also been one of the advisers to the Kenya or the Tanganyika Government during the Community negotiations, so again we knew each other very well. As we went round, we discussed the problems and he concocted the questions, and I made a note of them and prepared possible answers, and would send them to the Committee, and they could follow them up if they liked. They had a splendid time. They had a tremendous row half way through, which is what you always expect anyway, and another one at the end because when they got to Karachi they couldn't complete the Pakistan programme owing to the 1974 UK General Election having been called. They all had to return to London, but feared that there weren't enough seats on the plane for all of them, so the argument concerned which of them was to have priority in the allocation of the available seats. Somebody said, "I'm the senior," and somebody else said, "but I have the smallest majority!"

But they were very nice people. There was Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler, who'd been a settler in Kenya, and he loved going out on the farms which we got to and was ready to thrust his arm up the backside of a cow or whatever. Then there was Nigel Spearing, who had taught geography at the Elliot School in Putney. He was just thrilled to be flying over the area he'd taught about. He had the chance to drive the train between Delhi and Agra. Then Sir Bernard Braine was the Chairman. Although he was Member for South East Essex, he was popularly known in the House as 'the Member for South East Asia', he took such an interest. He was a charming person. His interest was the SOS Villages charity. The fourth member was Frank Judd, afterwards an ODM Minister and the head of Oxfam. Then we had a couple of palantypists, young people from the House of Commons or somewhere. And then, when we were in Nepal ...

MM: You mentioned Peter Ricketts. You don't mean the current Permanent Under Secretary at the FCO?

IB: No no. This is another Peter Ricketts. I think Terence O'Brien was Ambassador in Kathmandu, and this was my first ever visit to Nepal. I can remember that, while we were there, there was a big reception for the Parliamentarians, and all the lights went out – quite a regular occurrence – so the candles were duly brought in in a stately procession. Those brown-outs don't occur any longer in Kathmandu, as far as I could see when I went back there on a visit for my charity, PLAN, a few years ago.

So those were some highlights from those years. And then after that I returned to the international side of the ODA as an Under Secretary. I was in charge of most multilateral aid, including the World Bank and the three Regional Banks, and international negotiations affecting aid and development. Later, after the change of government in 1979, I also looked after our relations with FAO, UNIDO, the UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF and the new International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome.

Under Secretary at the FCO/ODA 1976-90

MM: Now, when you were an Under Secretary, were you FCO?

UNCTAD the NIEO and international debt owed by developing countries

IB: No, we were initially ODM. In 1979 we became ODA – the ODA being a wing of the Foreign Office. The first thing I got involved in was the Fourth General UNCTAD meeting in Nairobi, a familiar place. We were there for four weeks. It was my first international conference but I really could not see how it worked. It was quite intense, because it concerned the New International Economic Order.

New International Economic Order (NIEO)

I should say something about this and the background to the scene on which I was now thrust.

In 1968 President Nixon cut the link between the dollar and gold, in relation to which all currencies were then directly or indirectly fixed. I believe this was because of the strains caused by the Vietnam War. So countries which had sold their commodities, particularly oil, in dollars had to accept a gold-devalued price. This in part stimulated the creation of OPEC, a cartel containing all the main non-OECD producers, except some newer producers like Mexico.

In 1973 OPEC raised the oil price around six-fold, to some \$12 per barrel. This caused the first “oil shock”. It was not nearly so damaging as the later decision to doubt the price, taken in 1978/79. Other commodity prices rose, but then fell sharply as industrial consumers tried to cut back their imports and struggled with inflation when they couldn’t. Many OPEC countries could not spend their new wealth, so they deposited it in the commercial banks. These had to re-lend it to keep going, so they financed the huge oil and other deficits being run up elsewhere, particularly in Latin America. They had the fond belief that sovereign countries could not go bankrupt. Hence the eventual Latin American banking and debt crisis. Meanwhile the higher oil price made it worthwhile to develop new sources, such as those in the North Sea.

The general turmoil led to ill-tempered arguments in all the main UN bodies. Those who felt they had just emerged from colonialism were doubly hit, as oil imports and industrial imports cost more, but their primary product exports bought less. In 1974 the UN Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly declared that an NIEO should be established, over the protests of many industrial countries. This document pointed to world inequities, demanded “active, full and equal” participation for the developing countries in making and implementing any decisions affecting them, and affirmed their sovereign right to nationalise control of their own natural resources and economic activities. The NIEO called particularly for “just and equitable” price relations between raw materials, primary commodities, and other things which they imported, and those which they exported. It also called for many special benefits for

all or some developing country groups. In short, it meant a kind of world management of all markets and associated finance, to protect non-OECD countries. Within the UN bodies countries were always classed as “G77” for the developing countries, “Group B” for the OECD (within which the EC group met separately to coordinate its views), “Group D” for the USSR and its allies, and China, which would join no group.

The arguments about the NIEO went back and forth in successive meetings and bodies. What fell within the EC competence, such as trade issues, had to be decided in Brussels. In early 1976 we were about to tackle this again at the fourth general conference of UNCTAD – a body set up to look at issues of trade, aid and development. The UNCTAD Secretariat had produced proposals in all the main areas, which were mostly unwelcome. For commodities they proposed a “Common Fund”, meant to stabilise prices at a “fair” level by financing buffer stocks of each of the 18 commodities, so that peaks and troughs in demand and supply for one commodity could be balanced out by those on a different cycle. Oil, however, was *not* among the 18. The cost of the Fund would doubtless be mainly carried by OECD members. The other main proposals involved debt relief for all developing countries and the more or less obligatory transfer to them of technology on special terms

We had dissension within the European Community, particularly over the Common Fund for Commodities, which British and German Ministers wouldn’t have at any price. And we had the problem of debt and debt relief, which was more on my side. We had a certain amount of briefing about the leeway which could be accepted in London, before we went into the negotiations. This Common Fund was meant to stabilise the prices and supply of eighteen very different commodities – a very French idea (“*organisation des marchés*”) – taking account that not all would need price support at the same time. I learned a lot about them at that stage, most of which I’ve forgotten: the difference between the hard ones and the soft ones, the difference between the various Commodity Agreements; you controlled coffee by export quotas while others had got intervention funds, like tin, to hold buffer stocks. The main Fund was meant to keep prices within an acceptable range: its lesser wing was to fund research, product development and so on. This part was effectively to be an aid operation, but the main Fund was to intervene in normal trade.

So it was an exercise in trying to understand international economics and commerce. I could never see how the Conference would work with a hundred and something countries on one side and all the OECD members on the other. China played a lone hand, and the USSR ran their own *bloc* of votes. The Americans turned up with Henry Kissinger making a speech and disappearing. He was pushing the idea of an International Resources Bank, which the Conference turned down at the end because they were so furious with the way the US had played it. The Americans were not pleased about that. This was the first of a whole series of international meetings I attended, and I realised that they all worked in *blocs*. Nobody was ready to stand up and say their own party piece or their own views; everybody had to leave it to the Group of 77 or other spokesmen – it was done by groups. Group B was the OECD group, but the EEC had to have its say and where did Community competence start and finish? We had Luxembourg to run the EEC because it was their turn to hold the Presidency. They couldn't cope with it all and the Dutch came in. The Dutch were led by Jan Pronk, who is still in the business with the UN at the moment. He was Minister for Development. All the EEC meetings were held, not in a separate room but in a largish place with just a low screen round them, so you couldn't see them; but my goodness! you could hear them. So all the journalists that were interested were busy sitting outside listening to who was having a row with whom, and writing it all down and sending disobliging messages back to the supporters of One World Week and all the rest. I was quite lucky only to be dealing with debt.

I had a stroke of luck with a very good ODM economist, Graham Houston, who had an idea half way through the conference. He said we might approach the debt problem in a new way. Commercial debt had to be repaid, but what about aid debt? Graham said we had lent a lot of money to India and so forth over the years at various rates of interest. Nowadays if we were giving money to them, we would never charge any interest at all. So why should they be repaying interest? There should be some way of rectifying this process. So he wrote a paper dividing the two categories of debt, and I got that accepted as an interesting 'non-paper' by the EEC. The Indians got hold of it before we had it, practically and they were interested; something tangible was in sight for the poorer aid-dependent countries. But it didn't help much because at the end of that conference – and this is how it works – there was the so-

called “Mount Kenya Summit” when selected Ministers and officials from all Groups went to the New Stanley Hotel, up to the 15th floor and into the bedroom of the Filipino Minister or whoever was chairing the conference, and attempted to agree on Resolutions. People were craning over each other. I had Frank Judd with me at that time. He was there as our Minister of State to lead us at the end; without him I would not have been able to get in. Then they had to reach conclusions of one kind or another. We managed that because at one stage, I think it was the Indonesian Minister, uttered some incautious phrase which actually didn’t disagree with the terms of what we had drafted. We picked that up immediately. “You’ve got it just right, Minister! Let’s write it down straight away!” And we wrote it straight down and, as it had come from the other side, they had to accept the wording. So we didn’t have a row over debt at that meeting. People knew something was coming up for later meetings but also, of course, by dividing commercial debt from aid debt, you split the Latins off from the Asians and the Africans.

MM: Because?

IB: Because the Brazilians and others didn’t have any aid debt; they only had big commercial debts.

That was the conference, UNCTAD IV, at which President Marcos arrived – I don’t know if Imelda was there – to attend it because they had previously had UNCTAD III in his country. He arrived with a throne made of ivory, if you can believe this. When we got to the formal opening, everybody was waiting for Kenyatta. Instead of which, we received a message saying that President Kenyatta unfortunately had a previous engagement on his farm. It appeared that traditional dancers, who used to go to the farm everyday, were going to entertain him specially and therefore he couldn’t come and open the Conference. He sent Daniel Arap Moi, or rather Murumbi as Vice-President, to do the opening. He wasn’t going to accept other alternative heads of state sitting on ivory thrones anywhere near him. (Not that it did Marcos any good in the end, of course. I suppose the elephants weren’t helped either!)

The North/South dialogue

So that was my first UN-type experience – one very common, of course, for regular diplomats, but new to me. And then we had a series of international conferences. The next thing was the North-South Dialogue in Paris, in the Avenue Kleber Conference Centre which used to be the headquarters of the Gestapo during the war. That was an initiative of President Giscard d’Estaing, and was restricted to selected countries and organisations, including the EEC, which had to function as one. This was in the year Jimmy Carter was elected US President. The first meetings were held in July, then September/October, and what everybody was trying for on our side – it was between consumers and producers basically – was to get the OPEC countries to engage in a process which tied them down in relation discussing prices of oil with consumers, some sort of deal of that kind, in return for, and the ‘return fors’ were the things we were arguing about. At the end of that conference, we thought we were getting somewhere, but then the OPECs rapidly retreated, so there was no real deal done at the end of it. I think the French lost a lot of kudos from having proposed this. President Giscard had put it forward, and then it didn’t work properly. It went on in two halves: the first was before the American election and, during that half, the Dutch held the EEC Presidency, and provided the spokesmen with the Commission. The Presidency had to co-ordinate all Member States’ views, so very often they could only voice “lowest common denominator” opinions. But that wouldn’t do, so they increasingly spoke within what they considered the boundaries, sometimes to the anguish of other EEC members. And then the American election supervened and Gerald Ford lost the election to Jimmy Carter. It was obvious that there was going to be a new American policy, particularly in relation to things like aid volume. Therefore nobody met until the following spring and, at that time which would be now early 1977, the Americans had a new delegation which was useful to us. But we were also by this time in the Presidency, and the Dutch were not. So we had the advantage of being able to run the organisation of EEC meetings along with the Commission, and we naturally had to speak on behalf of the whole of the Community on matters falling to the Presidency, which were not within Community competence. This was an enormous responsibility but it also meant that we were able to put things in a way which met our own interests, as we saw them. I had to run the sub-group on debt and aid volumes, and this was quite useful because I had opposite me a large raft

of Commonwealth countries, including India and Jamaica, or one of the West Indians, all of whom understood the kind of language we would talk in. So on the question of debt I put it to them that the approach which we had now laid out formally, the same one that we had used in Nairobi with some knobs on, would achieve the result that they would want. We were not going to give them debt relief but we were going to give them retrospective alterations in terms of their aid. It depends which way you go up a mountain; you still reach the top, but don't insist on the other way because it's too hard for us. There were various cryptic messages and so forth, and in the end we reached agreement on all that, but the Conference itself drew to a close without a conclusion, with people lying in heaps over the floor, sleeping all night, or not sleeping, in the usual international way. At one point, however, the German Ambassador protested to me that we had given away a point essential to his country. On aid volume we negotiated a text promising that donors would raise their *commitments* – but not referring to *expenditure*: for some donors (not us) they were the same thing.

So the debt and terms issue went back into UNCTAD for the next round. The end of the CIEC was handled by Ministers, and in our case this was Roy Jenkins. I was amazed by the nonchalance and skill with which he picked up and handled the brief. The EEC Co-Chairman and I wanted time to brief him properly on where things stood. But he only summoned us to attend him at his breakfast in the hotel, just before going in to bat, which he did brilliantly. (I had to feed him short notes from behind as the arguments proceeded). A remarkable man.

The following year we went on to that UNCTAD meeting, and, for that, we managed to agree a British position under which we would provide over a billion pounds' worth of such assistance – that's to say aid debt relief – to over twenty countries and Judith Hart went to Geneva to announce this. I was able to pilot this idea through the Treasury for her, and it made a very considerable impression. The Germans soon followed suit with a couple of billion or whatever, and the Canadians announced debt forgiveness, so we had quite a raft of donor measures and in 1978 real relief was offered to the poorest countries, which were the ones that were receiving assistance. But there was nothing there for the commercially indebted people and they had to go to the Paris Club as before. That was extremely interesting because it showed how an

idea can progress from one meeting into another, and sometimes its time arrives. India, in fact, chose not to have debt relief because they feared this could affect their creditworthiness. So we supplied equivalent free sterling every year, and were able for the first time to use its counterpart for local spending on such projects as rural development.

Apart from dealing with the EC in these international discussions, I had our aid relations with the Community, and also the World Bank, as staple functions in my job. This period included the long but successful negotiation of IDA's Sixth Replenishment. Within the EC, where we held the Presidency for those vital months in early 1977, our main achievement was to get agreement first to an aid programme for the so-called "non-Associates" – the developing countries of Asia and Latin America – and then to get the governing Regulations for that programme through; we also made progress on food aid.

We had been frustrated by the refusal of others to agree to a non-Associates aid programme for some time. The Parliament was in favour of it, but the Finance Council, which decided the budget, had agreed an internal block, which was that if any of the "big three" – France, Germany or Britain – voted against any finance proposal, they would join together in opposition and so create a blocking minority. Year after year, the proposal for non-Associates' aid fell victim to this obstruction. However, this time our Minister, Judith Hart, persuaded Treasury Ministers that as achievement of this programme was an important aim of British policy, they should break ranks in the Finance Council. This "betrayal" shocked the French and Germans but it meant that a tiny initial amount of 16mn. u/a was at last available – subject to our agreeing the Regulations. In the Council Working Party we were able to join forces with the Germans (represented there by their development people), and a pretty good set of rules was devised and then agreed by the Council. Once established, the programme grew rapidly; unlike the EDF, whose size the contributors determined, this was met from the Community's own regular budget.

Regional Development Banks

The other main part of my responsibility in that job was to look after the Regional Development Banks for Asia, Latin-America and Africa; not the Caribbean, that's a

small one, nor the East African, which I had been dealing with before. Now all these bodies required extra capital from time to time. They all had soft funds which needed commitments to be replenished every three or four years.

The Inter-American Development Bank

The strangest one that I encountered was the Inter-American Development Bank where seventeen non-regional countries were confined to 8% of the voting power. Everything that mattered in the bank was decided by the USA and by the four big Latin countries: Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Nobody else really counted. I could not at all understand to begin with how it worked. Everything was formal; there were coffee breaks which started at 10.00 o'clock in the morning and went on until 10.00 o'clock at night. There were little meetings in the corners, but generally the non-regional countries, all of them in Europe, Japan and other places like that, were totally ignored, and yet we were expected to put up a chunk of the money – and much more than 8% of the “soft” fund. We had to develop a position which would protect us from being simply dragged along with everybody else, and make our views felt. I was also instructed to cut down our aid contributions, as they were not going to what Britain considered the poorest countries.

It was characteristic of that bank, and perhaps other things, that there was enormous misunderstanding between the North Americans and the Southern Americans. They never seemed to be able to get to grips on issues, but it was no use our coming in in the middle proposing something, because everybody would tell us to run away home. So the only way of getting anything done constructively in that bank, as a non-American and a non-large South American, was to develop an idea and float it through somebody else. I managed to do this on the first occasion along with my German colleague (we were very close to the Germans – they shared our electoral constituency and Director, and we took it in turns, along with Italy; there were nine in our group), and we got this particular device through as a means of satisfying some of the middle-income countries that didn't really need any cash from us – instead, we used the loan repayments to the Bank to subsidise the interest on new loans for this group. Later on there were other problems I managed to solve in the Bank shortly before my retirement.

The system in our constituency was that whichever Governor country held the Directorship also chaired and spoke for the group. At the start of my tenure, we had the Director (Angus Rae, formerly Under-Secretary in charge of Latin America in the ODM). This was not an unmixed blessing, since he did not agree with our aims and strategy. Later on, the Italians took over, and their Governor, Fernanda Forcignano, took over our group's leadership; but as she felt unconfident of her own English she often asked me to speak for her. In that first replenishment negotiation, the non-Regionals had two special concerns apart from their unequal burden-sharing and poor representation in the Bank. One was to ensure that 50% at least of all lending went to benefit the poor. Another was to make certain that if the Americans delayed their pledged contributions, the rest of us would be able to delay our own similarly, and not find them put to advance use to cover the US-created gap.

Early on we had a meeting in Stockholm, at which the possible target for the poor was raised. To my surprise the Governor for Venezuela or Ecuador – I forget which – said that his country favoured an even larger figure than we did, and formally proposed 60%. I made sure that we got the exact Spanish text of his remarks and filed them away for later. When we got to a very frustrating meeting in Barbados, which was supposed to tidy everything up, the representative of the same country intervened in the debate to say that he was against *any* target at all! I was able to skewer him politely right away by saying that I had expected him to repeat his country's formal proposal from Stockholm (which I then read out in Spanish). Obviously he had no idea of this at all, and the debate rapidly ended with the Latinos agreeing hastily to the 50% figure again, without more fuss.

This Barbados meeting really exasperated us all. We were kept waiting for hours, without any information on the negotiations between the big countries, and then asked to join the President to hear what was proposed, at about 11 pm. As we went in we agreed privately that we were not going to go quietly. I started off with some extremely rough questions, declared their answers unsatisfactory, and then passed a note to the Germans and Dutch to carry on. Gradually, as more and more non-Regionals started to be stroppy, the room filled up with more and more concerned Bank officials. Eventually, with an ill grace, we accepted the deal, but not for after an hour or more. We had made our point.

On the other issue, which was agreed in the Committee of Governors without any trouble, we got to the final reading of the draft Resolution at a meeting in Washington. I then discovered, after carefully checking the text, that our safeguard had not been put in! This was obviously an attempt by the clever but devious General Counsel, Jerry Levinson, to put one over us in what he thought were the interests of the Bank. I halted the proceedings and insisted that we must have our way. Many of the other Governors could not see the implications of the text. Finally Levinson and I were sent away to sort it out next door. He tried to get me to accept the text, but I refused; if the non-Regionals were not satisfied on this, there would be no deal. At last he told me to draft the text the way I wanted it, but instantly, so that the Governors' Committee could resume. Luckily my long training in the C.O. and on the East African Treaty came to my help and I turned in a text on the spot, which Levinson and the other Governors had to accept.

Just after the IADB met in Colombia, on the plane to Washington, I heard that Galtieri had invaded the Falklands. It was extremely lucky for me, as I'd have had to cope without briefing, and Latino feelings ran very high. By the following year, things were over and there was only one intemperate speech at the Panama meeting. All I had to do then was to follow the Nicaraguan, who stressed that no political considerations must influence the Bank – of course, he said that to criticise the US for opposing his loans - and to insist that any documents in English mentioned the “Falklands” and not the “Malvinas”.

The Asian and African Banks

The Asian Development Bank was quite different; it was very businesslike and was dominated by the Japanese. The regional countries included both donors and recipients, like Australia, New Zealand and so forth, and the non-regionals, the less important, normally went along very well. I might say something later about our meeting in China in 1989 at the time of the of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations. But for most of the time it was all routine to the point of boring. The African Development Bank always had a row of some kind going on, and sometimes it was over the President, sometimes over something else, but they usually managed to get themselves sorted out in the end and I think they have proved to be a reasonably

useful instrument now for stability in that very difficult continent. The problems there were always the same: over-ambitious demands from the staff, over what they thought they could do; severe doubts among the donors about the way they were doing it; concerns, particularly from the more strait-laced amongst us, the puritans in Britain, the Dutch and Scandinavians and so forth about too much money going to the wealthy, and generally whether or not the Bank would contribute usefully to solutions in Africa. So those were the characteristics of those banks.

The negotiation of these replenishments is quite an art, and each had its own cast of characters. Usually the same people dealt, as I did, with all the institutions, though a few came from other home ministries. Many of the same issues came up, and sometimes we arranged the meetings back-to-back. The US and France fielded excellent, but tough, teams from their Treasury; the Germans, like us, ran things from the BMZ, or aid ministry. It was important to create a sense of momentum so that the process did not become interminable – as it did in the IADB, where President Ortiz Mena, from Mexico, had to resign as a result of his failure to act to break the deadlock between the US and the “big four”. I recall an AfDB meeting in Washington, chaired by Bernard Chidzero of Zimbabwe, who was that year chairman of the Bank’s Board of Governors. I was not at the negotiations, as it was the turn of the Germans to lead our constituency, as Eberhard Kurth very ably did. Chidzero announced in the evening that he had to fly back to Zimbabwe the following morning for his daughter’s wedding, so agreement must be reached quickly. Hours went by, and there was no sign of things being settled. Somehow or other this deadline kept being extended, but the pressure was piled on every now and then by Chidzero telling us he had to leave.

(Another extraordinary chairman was General Romulo of the Philippines, who chased through the final decisions at UNCTAD V in Manila with a sparkling set of quips at 3 or 4 am. No one would have known that this diminutive figure was not only a national hero, but, at the age of 88, had just married a new wife!)

Less effective was John Bolton of the US, who led at one set of replenishment negotiations for the AfDB/AfDF. As usual, the US began with a list of demands for improvements in this and that, most of which could be dealt with – and were – in subsequent rounds. It then came to the point that we were all going to have to put our

cards, and our money, on the table. To our astonishment, a new US delegate appeared, who had clearly not been properly briefed about the situation and had no authority to negotiate anything – certainly not a contribution. Of course all the others piled in to criticise the Americans for not having moved, when all their points had been sorted out. It must have been very difficult for their representative. This meant an extra, expensive, meeting for all of us and a lot of delay in getting the decisions in place. It seemed clear to me that Bolton, who was always unyielding, had not wanted to appear himself, and had sent this unfortunate in his place without explaining where things stood.

Getting caught unbriefed was something I fell into myself once. We had had a series of meetings in Rome on other IFIs, and went on to an IDA meeting to round them off. I had not appreciated that we were now at the end of the road. Our share offer, which involved a share cut, was not seen as generous enough by others, and we were obviously going to be open to criticism at home. At the lunch break I rang the Permanent Secretary at an open phone in the corridor, and got agreement to our making a small extra “voluntary” contribution, which at least evidenced some goodwill towards meeting the target. The books were nearly closed, but I was allowed to squeeze in my piece before the end of the meeting. Everyone there knew, of course, what had happened, but in Parliament we were able to point to this little bit extra on top of what we considered our fair share, and claim credit for it.

It was normal for there to be a shortfall in funding the “target”, whatever that was, when many States wanted to reduce their percentage share and not enough others were willing to make an increase. “Voluntary” extra one-off contributions to fill the gap were always needed. In the IADB this helped us to establish the principle of fairer non-regional burdens, given that nobody wanted us to have increased shares or a third Director. We divided our offers into two, relating the first to the share in the Bank and the rest was declared as “voluntary”. The importance of this device is that you start from the lower base in the next set of negotiations. Other devices for gap-filling included using reflows, at the end of the cycle, to cover new commitments.

After my retirement, I had to chair a replenishment negotiation for the African Development Fund (the soft associate of the African Bank), a body which I’d helped to create as British representative in 1972. That was quite fascinating because, of

course, it's different when you're running a card game at the top end of the table and when you're sitting there playing one of the card hands down the room. I certainly would not have missed that opportunity for anything. I had a shortfall problem in these negotiations too. We had set a target of \$3bn. (which the Africans regarded as insufficient), but, even with an extra French contribution which President Babacar N'Diaye managed to get, right at the end, we were short. Then came Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, whose administration moved lock, stock and barrel on the financial side to London. Kuwait pledged us an extra \$100mn – a smart move to reinforce sympathy for their cause round Africa – and the day was saved.

Aid to Africa

From 1983 to late 1986 I was the Under Secretary in charge of aid to Africa, the Middle East and Gibraltar. The last was a perpetual concern, because of the trilateral relationship with Spain and the EC dimension, but was largely handled by the Diplomatic Wing. In the Middle East our concerns were limited to Yemen and help through UNRWA for the Palestinians. But Africa presented major challenges in three areas: so-called “programme aid” for general balance of payments, project aid, and the continuing provision of British skills.

Just before I took over, my predecessor, Martin Lynch, had got Ministers' agreement to the policy that our programme aid to Africa should reinforce, and not undermine, the help being offered towards structural adjustment by the IMF and the World Bank. There were several reasons why this was needed. First, many African countries kept their exchange rates far too high. This made imports for the elites and the towns cheap, but it devastated local producers, including peasant food and cash crop farmers. In Ghana, whole areas of cocoa were just left to grow wild. It was not worth selling the cocoa for export, unless you lived near the border and could walk your harvest into Togo or elsewhere and sell it for CFA francs.

The turnaround which the Bank and Fund were helping had begun in Ghana. It was said that the IMF representative had convinced President Jerry Rawlings of the need for adjustment by taking him down to the street to see how many cedis it really took

to buy one US dollar; this turned out to be about thirty or so instead of the official rate of only three.

The other argument for adjustment was that, in the flush of national enthusiasm following decolonisation, and egged on by the principles of the NIEO, most countries had nationalised their public services and businesses. But these were usually stuffed with relatives and place-men of the powerful, run very poorly and under political control, and unable or unwilling to maintain the assets or systems. Year after year their losses sucked huge amounts of money out of the national budgets, at the expense of things like basic education and health. The Bank and Fund usually wanted these privatised, but that didn't always work out. It would have been better if those services truly providing basic public goods, like water, could have been run more efficiently under some middle way.

It was our general policy to provide quite a lot of money to support the World Bank and its Special Programme for Africa, which I think was launched in 1984.

On project aid, the main problem was the appetite for large new investments that outside businesses were only too anxious to sell. Juicy contracts were at stake, and with them the prospect of back-handers to enrich local Ministers and officials. Since all sensible donors refused to pay for "golden beds" by aid, (and the Crown Agents vetted all our aid-paid contracts), they were paid for by commercial export credits, all building up debts that later became unsustainable. But as the commercial race was spurred on by the economic problems of the 1970s, several OECD countries – though not the Americans – decided to offer trade credits mixed up with some soft aid. This was led by France, but inevitably others felt that they must follow suit or lose out. Finally we too had to give way, and agreed in the ODM to a "defensive" scheme under which we would match mixed credit, up to half, offered by others to countries that were not too rich, if the scheme passed a rather cursory development test. This at least weeded out some obvious turkeys.

There were obvious arguments within Whitehall if we were felt to have rejected a project wrongly. However, I took part in at least one case – that of helicopters for India – in which top management collectively refused to endorse the project, and the

Permanent Secretary, as Accounting Officer, had to write a warning letter to Ministers. Later the Pergau Dam case in Malaysia and ensuing legislation put paid finally to the use of aid for primarily commercial and not development purposes.

Trying to get a grip on the turkeys meant also trying to dissuade other donors from breaking ranks to get the business. In this I was luckily able to use the network of officials I knew elsewhere who dealt with the World Bank. But it did not always come off. There was a particular dam project in Kenya, pushed by a notoriously corrupt Minister, which the World Bank proved to be an unnecessary investment for at least a decade – Kenya could get all the power it needed meanwhile much more cheaply in other ways. I rang all my contacts, and even the Japanese agreed not to take the project on. My former “international” colleagues in the French Trésor were also against France paying. But they warned me that though they would do what they could, they did not have the last word – aid policy was split between several different ministries. Sure enough France finally broke ranks and offered mixed credits, which were joyfully taken up. However, I heard later a story that the Kenyans, in their eagerness, had not noticed till it was too late that the contract was written not in French francs, but in much harder and more expensive Swiss currency.

The donors co-ordinated their policies within the Consultative Groups organised and chaired by the World Bank. Each meeting of these would see the partner country coming to present its case, putting forward its investment and foreign exchange plans, together with Bank comments, and then hearing the pledges by each participant on what they were prepared to do to help.

Very occasionally the donors got tough, and there were always countries whose performance and policies were so abysmal that it was not worth the Bank calling any meetings. After my tenure there was a dramatic meeting of the Kenya Group at which the donors refused to pledge anything at all, unless and until President Moi abandoned the one-party State and held free elections. He did not want to give way, but he had to or his plans would have come to a grinding halt.

On British technical co-operation, we were still paying a lot of money twenty years after independence for particular British expatriates whom their governments wanted

to keep on, despite good nationals being available. I had negotiations, for instance, both over ending the supply of British judges to Kenya, and over the University of Malawi Vice-Chancellor, whom President Banda wanted to keep.

Corruption

We had always to be vigilant over the possibility of corruption. I refused the pleas of the Diplomatic Wing for some assistance to Zaire (Congo) because I had no illusions how anything would be used. Instead, they went along with the idea of our supplying the Sappers to rebuild some bridges and ferries. We also gave some bus parts. I was sure that, even if these parts never reached the Kinshasa transport system, they would be usefully deployed somewhere else in the country.

In the early 1960s I do not remember any of us being much worried about large-scale corruption in East Africa. There was, however, the continual public debate about “brotherisation”. That meant that, when an expatriate left, there could be fierce battles over his or her successor. The Kenya trade unions were a constant battlefield between people of different tribes to get elected to the top jobs. I think it would help if I explained a bit the social basis for both this and plain corruption, which we always thought of most in the context of West Africa, not East.

In nearly every country in the world your place and future are determined not so much by what you do as by what you are, and whom you know. Members of the extended family rely first on each other to help in adversity or provide advantages, and then on their surrounding group identity – caste, clan, tribe and so on. The State is seen not as holding a fair balance, but as a source for advantages or the opposite. You are expected to give your loyalty to the “big man” in your group – for instance by voting for him or his nominee in elections. In turn you can call on him to help you out or give you an advantage over those from other groups, if he is able. This sort of “patronage politics” gives everyone a safety net, but it subverts efficiency and independence. Such systems still flourish in our own Northern societies; think of the “old school tie”. It also fuels religious rivalry, since a group may define themselves by that instead of, or as well as, other characteristics. So in Kitui I met the Bohora

Muslims. They had converted *en masse* from Hinduism because they resented their low-caste status – this also is how many Christian missions grew.

In this social atmosphere, both “brotherisation” and plain corruption are bound to flourish. But the latter is also fuelled by the immense rewards, legitimate and otherwise, that senior officials and others in a position of authority can extract for such “favours” as permits, licences etc. It is quite common for the police to rely on bribes they receive to avoid prosecutions. When President Kibaki took office in Kenya a few years ago, and proclaimed a campaign against bribery, taxi drivers started refusing to pay bribes to the police, but promised instead to support their campaign for better pay. I’m afraid I don’t think that lasted very long.

The tradition of rulers treating the public purse as their own goes back a long way. It was particularly strong, I think, in West Africa with its system of inherited traditional chiefdoms. It is not surprising in such societies that private enrichment is at the expense of public moneys, and that seems impossible to root out.

We had Development Divisions, outposts, in Nairobi and down in Lilongwe on the Eastern side, and large programmes in Egypt and the Sudan. I made several trips to East and Central Africa. I never got to West Africa in this role. The most interesting one might have been to Zimbabwe. I went to Malawi as well and then the Permanent Secretary, Dick King, and I went on to Zimbabwe. We stayed with the High Commissioner and I had some negotiation to do on land issues with the Zimbabwe Government, which went very smoothly, although land settlement was a difficult subject.

MM: Which year was that?

The development of Zimbabwe

IB: That would be 1983, I think. Everybody looked at Zimbabwe and wondered which way it was going to go. It was a country of paradoxes. You had half the leaders who had fought in the bush and the other half had spent most of their IDI time abroad and had perhaps come back with American or other foreign wives. In the case

of Mugabe, his wife was Ghanaian. You had people who wanted to do things very sensibly. You had the best African civil servant I think I've ever met, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. He was quite up to Whitehall standards of Permanent Secretary, prepared to take decisions on behalf of his Minister without consulting him directly, all that kind of thing. The then Finance Minister was Bernard Chidzero, an excellent former senior UN official. And you had an extraordinary scene, which we saw when we turned on the television at the High Commissioner's Residence during our stay. Normally you would expect an African country's television to begin with what the President had for breakfast, or how he was entertaining traditional dancers, or receiving a delegation from China. This programme began with the Police Commissioner in full fig, cap and everything, being interrogated ferociously by a large group of women. What on earth was going on? It transpired that the Police Commissioner had decided in his wisdom that there were too many single women wandering around the streets at night, and they were all loose and prostitutes and should all be rounded up and put in detention. The result of that was, of course, that next day, after the operation took place, there were practically no nurses in the hospitals and no teachers in the schools. What is more, I understood, President Mugabe's wife, Sally from Ghana, was absolutely furious with what had happened. Therefore these ladies were unleashed to make mincemeat of the Police Commissioner in full public view, and it was extremely humiliating for him because of course he couldn't defend himself at all. Now I have yet to see anything like that in any other country in the world, even here, but this was Paxman style with a vengeance. That was Zimbabwe – and we all know what happened later. Perhaps Sally's early death from cancer had something to do with that.

MM: It's extraordinary that there is apparently so little protest at the enormous inflation that's occurring there to-day.

IB: We don't know what protest there can be, and what protests were there during the Weimar Republic; people simply spent their time trying to exist. I think that, particularly in a country which has got so far developed in terms of having a market economy and so forth, you go back to subsistence as far as you can. I remember asking a Ghanaian civil servant after Ghana returned to the path of IMF righteousness with Jerry Rawlings how he had managed to survive during the time of utter inflation

and incompetence, when the Ghanaian cedi was worth practically nothing in terms of dollars but was said to be much higher than it was. He said, “Oh well, you see my wife keeps chickens underneath the house.” So basically he ran a little restaurant on the side. People also did barter trade and they brought things forward to exchange, and that I think is probably the only way to exist. How long you can do it is a different matter. I have some faith in a country like Zimbabwe, as I would have in Kenya, above some others because I think that civil society has developed to such an extent that it could be resilient if and when it gets the chance again. There are people who are no longer in the country who could go back and help to put it together again and certainly, if you look at the example of Ghana, I think that, even though many of the Ghanaians who left the country stayed outside the country, it is progressing again very fast, and has done so for about twenty years now.

MM: Did we have a substantial aid programme in Zimbabwe?

Land settlement in Zimbabwe

IB: We had quite an important aid programme. I don't remember its exact size. The most important thing about it as far as land ownership was concerned was that the Government had the right under the initial ten-year constitution to expropriate what it wanted, but it had to pay for it in foreign currency. When the ten years expired, that restraint disappeared, but I think that's what gave people the reassurance to go on as they were then without seeing what would happen later on. We were in fact financing land settlement schemes on a willing buyer/willing seller basis on about 250,000 acres if I remember rightly; not all that much. But there were several types of scheme. We did the planning. They had to be properly planned farms for smallholders. There was to be some selection of the people concerned so that we knew they could farm. That was Type A, which we all thought was very good. Type B was co-operative, and this was a bit for what people would probably now be “war veterans”. They were youngsters with ideas of forming a co-operative but they were heavily over-capitalised with tractors and things – they used to ride around on them rather than use them economically. And then Type D, which was a group ranch, I think, useful for Matabeleland. I forget what Type C was. There were different types, and one of the things we had to negotiate was that we were not prepared to help Type B settlements

any longer, although this was politically thought to be important. We managed to get that through without much trouble.

Famine in Africa

However, my Africa stint was overtaken by the famine and its disastrous consequences and its spread. I do feel very responsible in a way for having been in charge then, and not seen what was likely to happen. The problem for us was that we were dealing in a concentrated way with only a number of 'our own' countries, the ones which we were closest to and where we had aid programmes. It was the other countries, in the Sahel zone, which were suffering the greatest devastation, and it took a lot of time and effort eventually to find out how bad the situations were. Ethiopia of course was brought to the screen by Michael Buerk and it immediately became the focus of intense effort. A large chunk of my staff had to be taken right away from other things to work exclusively on the relief effort for Ethiopia. There were quite tricky problems there and also arising in relation to Eritrea. The politics of this was awkward, because Colonel Mengistu and his regime were fighting the Tigreans, and yet those people were suffering at the far end in the north, in the camps, and so forth. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front were fighting in Eritrea, and yet they were needing food supplies too. On the whole, those food supplies were channelled through organisations like Christian Aid and so forth and we left it to the NGOs to get them through, and kind of blinked without looking too closely where it was going, I think. If you didn't help at both ends, you weren't really fulfilling your responsibility.

The other thing about Ethiopia is that they had a policy of autarky, I think I would call it, in each of the districts, the Woreda. Each was supposed to look after itself, and they weren't really permitted to furnish food for other areas, so that there was food in parts of the country which couldn't be got at for those in need elsewhere. I think it was impossible in the end to change that policy. We had to bring in everything from outside.

There were many problems elsewhere. For the Francophone Sahel countries we contributed extra food aid through the EC. For Kenya, where food was available, we

advanced programme aid to pay for extra machinery, fertilisers and so on, so that the counterpart shillings could be spent on famine relief.

Multilateral aid again (1986-1990)

I went on from Africa then to the international side again. This portfolio was more or less the same as the one I had earlier left, centring on the EU aid programmes, the multilateral banks and funds, and the UN Agencies not aligned to other ODA Departments (like the WHO).

In the EC, as it still was, our aims remained better overall allocation for development, especially to the poorest, better aid quality, and the need to prevent the programmes from undermining the efforts led by the World Bank to help economic recovery. We were able to devise a scheme under which allocations from the EDF were presented as “envelopes”. The country concerned was assured of a minimum amount to be committed over the five years of the Convention, but the rest was distributed later, in function of the way the first lot had been used, up to an agreed maximum. We continued to work to improve the quality of the programme for non-Associates in Asia and Latin America, and to keep the help going to the Mediterranean countries from the European Investment Bank soft window to only the poorer, such as Egypt. We also pushed for improvements in food aid, including local buying of food instead of its expensive conveyance from European surplus producers.

Late in 1986 Maurice Foley, the second Deputy Director-General of DG 8 (the Development Directorate), retired. I put in to succeed him, with our government’s support, but the post went to another British candidate – whom in fact I knew from our Colonial Office days – who was already working in the Commission. To begin with I felt this as a hard blow, but in fact it turned out for the best. You see, my life partner was Dutch, and our moving to Brussels would have been very convenient for his own studies and continued contact with his family in Holland. But in July 1988 he was drowned, on an adventure holiday in Pakistan, and I could never have managed to come through this terrible loss without the support of all my own family and friends, who were all in Britain.

I promised earlier to explain a bit about the importance of the multilateral banks. They are owned 100% by their members, which are all States, and although only a portion of their subscriptions is called up, the rest of the authorised capital serves to give a solid guarantee to their bond-holders of repayment. So they are able in principle to borrow, and on-lend, at keener rates than can other financial institutions. In practice the financial markets also watch how much of the capital is underwritten by countries from the OECD. Their other main function is to scrutinise very carefully the projects put forward for loans, and the programmes in which these are set, and huge efforts are made to involve their technical and professional staff, along with those of the intending borrower, in working up any loan proposal. Their soft funds are used to pay for their commitments to those countries judged unable to repay loans at market rates. Sometimes, of course, a mix is possible.

From the early 1970s the World Bank began to assume the leadership role in virtually all development, under President McNamara. Every year his speech to the Annual Meeting was used to analyse and put in the spotlight the problems in a particular sector, such as agriculture, education, population growth etc. The Bank would then lead a co-ordinated attempt by all the donor community to ratchet up their work dealing with these often neglected themes. Some of the Bank's solutions did not come off, especially in rural development, where new structures were set up in borrowing countries which starved the original State services of money and competent staff, making the results unsustainable. But generally the quality of the Bank's work is outstanding, and its intellectual and research resources far beyond those of any other single donor.

The three regional banks essentially tried to complement the World Bank, but there was some jealousy or sensitivity about its giant status, not least when it promoted policies and loans for structural and sectoral adjustment. However, the donors collectively would insist, in all soft fund and capital increase negotiations, that they must work together.

Right away after returning to the multilateral side I was involved in two replenishment negotiations for the IDA and for IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development. This was built on three Groups of members, the OECD countries, the members of OPEC, and the rest, and the basic principle was the sharing

of burdens, traditionally 60/40, between the two donor groups. Its President, Idriss Jazairy, was an extremely subtle and experienced diplomat from Algeria, with great ambitions for the Fund; but he often found himself frustrated by the difficulties of coordinating the separate attitudes and interests of the two main groups. IFAD loans were largely given on intermediate terms, and the interest paid on these helped the Fund to keep going when there was an interruption in contributions. The first Gulf War, soon after I retired, made it impossible for the OPEC members to negotiate or speak collectively, and it had to rely for new lending on the repayments and interest on past loans. I was at that time trying to help IFAD to find a way out of other negotiating problems, but obviously this work had to be abandoned.

IFAD is in Rome doing quite a useful amount of work, but very much overshadowed by the FAO, which was at that stage run by a man with endless ambitions and pride, Edouard Saouma from Lebanon.

MM: A tremendously corrupt figure.

IB: Well, I went to the FAO Annual Conference every two years as the Under Secretary who had to lead the delegation. It always took about four weeks and sometimes spilt over beyond that. I always had a feeling that the atmosphere of Rome was somehow historically corrupting. You looked around and you saw the Circus and the Baths and all these places, and you wondered what it did to people. Anyway, Saouma ran the FAO as a personal fief. The FAO had Permanent Representatives assigned to it by every country, including our own. Many of those Permanent Representatives looked for their bread and water in the direction of the Director General rather than to their own governments. He was able, for instance, to get the constitution changed so that he could run for more than two terms, although it was the official UN and other policy that two terms was enough for anybody in any agency. He always had the numerical majority.

MM: By offering bribes to all the receivers of aid.

IB: He had the Group of 77 who would vote for anything he wanted.

MM: Because he said to these countries when he went round on tour, vote for me or else you will get no more aid.

IB: Things were distributed. FAO has its own smallish technical co-operation programme but it also had money from the United Nations Development Programme in the areas for which it is responsible: food and agriculture. It was known to be better for dissidents, like some of the Western countries, to any of its policies or its budget or something to meet outside the FAO buildings because, wherever you were in that building – in the Ethiopia Room or the Philippines Room or anywhere else – it was very likely that somebody was listening in to everything that you said. It was a particularly awkward body to work in because the OECD countries were divided. Some of them strongly favoured the Director General whatever he did, and the others were much more sceptical, if I can put it that way. We had a group with the Nordics, the Dutch, the British, the Americans, Canadians, Australians and so forth, and even Singapore once joined in, and some of the Africans: Gambia, Nigeria and Kenya at one stage, and even Zambia. I can remember being very anxious about some of the things that the Director General wanted. The first tussle I was involved in was in 1981 over the budget, and I had instructions from the Minister, Neil Marten, to be tough over this, to try to get the budget down. It was completely hopeless to do that. I had to take a very strong line and, when I got to my speech, I included an African proverb, (I had actually invented it) which they let pass on the other side. Then they suddenly realised that it was aimed against the Director General! And so everybody from Africa came in that hadn't spoken and said, "This is an insult to Africa" and all that sort of thing. But I played it quite tight. The risk was that we could have been voted off the FAO Council, which was the interim governing assembly. This would chiefly have affected our prestige, but it wouldn't have been nice to have that happen. At one stage I was invited to lunch by the Tanzanian delegation, which was very useful. Many Africans came as well and I knew that we needed their votes if we were going to survive against the Turks, who would be the people put up against us. Can you imagine: Turkey being preferred to the UK. So, when it got to the end of the lunch, I stood up and sang a little Swahili pop song in my speech of thanks on behalf of the guests. The words of the song went along the lines 'You invited me to your house and you gave me a very nice bed; you invited me to eat your food and I ate very good food.' It had been a popular song in Dar es Salaam a few years before, and that

went down very well. Afterwards the Tanzanians came to me and said I did not need to worry about the vote. But in the event it was actually quite close; we could have been kicked out of the Council.

That was my first Conference and later on I had another scrap over reforms, which we wanted the FAO to make. That was also at the time when Saouma was going to have to contest an African candidate for election to be Director General. This candidate came from Benin. He was a very nice man who was actually an official in the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the other body established in Rome, but not under the FAO's control. IFAD was run by Idris Jazairy, a most outstanding Algerian. It was unwise that the Africans met the evening before the election within the purlieu of the FAO building. We understood from one of those concerned who had been at the meeting, a Minister, that afterwards a succession of African Ministers had been invited upstairs to see the Director General and had been told that, "There's this and there's that which your country might get, and of course the vote is secret so, if you don't vote for the African candidate, who's to know that it's you?" The result was that the African candidate lost quite heavily. This was despite being backed by the OAU and besides being backed by the reformers like ourselves. Saouma was re-elected.

Negotiating tactics

It was the way things happened. There were tactics. I learned a few negotiating tactics in my career and one of these worked OK. We had had a long argument over the reforms which we thought were needed by FAO. There had been a process of review which we knew was not going to end up in anything. Then there was inevitably a working group to try to reach a Resolution, and the other side – that is to say the Group 77 delegates - insisted that they wanted to choose not only their own members of this group to review reform, but ours as well. That was a gift, of course, to the Americans and ourselves, who said it was absolutely absurd. We were not going to have our representatives at this meeting chosen by the Group 77. We would choose the ones we wanted, thank you very much. It meant that all the softies, the French and the Italians, had to keep quiet because they could not possibly have stood up and said they wanted the Group 77 people to choose our delegates. So, instead of

getting, as they hoped France, Belgium, Spain, Turkey or something like that, they were landed with five hard-liners: the US, UK, Switzerland, Netherlands and Finland. It was the last thing they wanted. So then there was no meeting until finally we said we were not going to meet until X, Y and Z. Then we learned that they had enticed the Finn and the American number two in to talk about talks and, by the time we found out about that, they had already got through drafting the second paragraph. We sent a message in to our people telling them to stop the meeting and to break it off. We sent our chosen people instead. They couldn't see that what they had agreed to was wrong in the draft. This is a problem with people who don't always speak English as a first language. This is where it is important to be able to master the nuances. We struggled to get it back on keel but we couldn't completely. We did make some progress, though.

Then we came to the main plenary and of course this resolution had to be accepted, and I knew what was going to happen: the Americans were going to say they had been instructed not to accept it, which would cause everybody in the room to fall down on them. So we sat next to the Americans and I passed their delegate a note saying they were not to worry as I was going to intervene immediately after him. So they said their piece and I quickly put my flag up and said I wanted to take us into a different area. I said it was very unusual but I wanted to express personal thanks to the two ladies from Mexico and Algeria who had sat with us on the drafting committee, because they were such a wonderful example of "women in development", and they had helped us along, and so on. By the time they had heard all this stuff, the meeting was completely side-tracked. Well then, of course, everybody clapped like mad for the ladies. They had forgotten their irritation with the Americans. The Algerian representative was so thrilled, she came over and practically kissed me because we had given her a mention in the plenary. And then I gave my Assistant strict instructions. I told him that it was his business to see that my exact words appeared in the verbatim report, because I had slipped in an offer of technical assistance to the DG for a management review. This was the last thing he wanted mentioned, but unfortunately for him the meeting's Chairman picked up my offer and welcomed it. Sure enough there was nothing in the first 'verbatim' report, and my Assistant sat there until they put them in. So there are tiny little tactical things that you get to know.

I had to do something of the sort in Manila, too, at UNCTAD V in 1979. I had a working party, which I knew would go on all night, all about debt and aid. So I decided to skip my normal dinner and ordered it for 3.00 o'clock in the morning instead, because I thought that would be about the right psychological moment. Then, of course, we would be dragging things out, with the Brazilians and people who weren't agreeing to anything. Presently there was a knock on the door at 3.00 o'clock in the morning and in came my veal Holstein and fresh pineapple ice cream, all that sort of stuff, and I set to in full view of all the others. This was psychologically destructive to the other side, because they could see I was ready to go on now for another four hours! I've done that twice, and it's worked out quite well. At the World Food Council in 1980 in Yugoslavia, I got the EEC delegations to go out to the local sweet and cake shop in Novi Sad, and we had a little party in our corner for the Community only; everybody else was restricted to bottled water and black coffee. This was during a 14-hour negotiation on the proposed text of the Council's conclusions. That wasn't as bad as it sounds, since the alternative was to take the guided tour around the local sausage factory. I had to speak for the Dutch Presidency as they were not on the Council. I got the "cake break" because some paragraphs dealt with agricultural trade and for that our spokesman was the Commission.

Anyway, all this is rather fun. I should mention my visit to Beijing. This was for the Asian Development Bank Governors' meeting in 1989. Taiwan belongs to the Asian Development Bank separately from China. The Bank is not a UN organisation so Taiwan couldn't be kicked out. There was tremendous interest in China when we arrived there at the fact that the Taiwanese were to be represented by the Governor of their Bank. She went round and was followed everywhere by reporters. We then had the inaugural meeting. Chris Patten went there, obviously, to make his number with the Chinese and I think it was his first introduction. I wrote a speech for him. Then he would do bilateral business and I would attend to the ordinary stuff of the Bank meeting. So we had the inaugural lunch, a banquet affair, with endless courses, in the Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square. At the end of that there was a meeting between Zhao Ziyang, the General Secretary, the big man, and some of the Governors, including Chris Patten, and then there was a sort of generalised meeting between Li Peng the Prime Minister, who was then not at the top, and the rest of us.

Then we were told that our coaches were ready and would take us back to the Great Wall Hotel on the other side of Beijing. Would we kindly go out of the side entrance? So we thought this was rather odd, got into our coaches which were lined up outside and these things bumped off along the side roads past the laundries and canals and things, and eventually we found ourselves back where we knew we ought to be. At that stage, some of us turned on the television, and there we got direct from Tiananmen Square the students arriving from the University to demonstrate. It coincided with this meeting, and that is why we had all been sent out by the side door, so as not to meet them. But I believe the Czech Ambassador, or somebody like that, had a car which took the wrong turning and found itself in the procession. The point was that the University is very far, as I understood it, from the Hall, and the authorities had not thought that the march would continue all the way; they thought that the students would get tired and fall out. Well of course, after that, every day and all the time we had our TVs on, getting CNN news from Atlanta beamed direct, however, from Tiananmen Square. Because Gorbachev, the preacher of *perestroika*, was coming, the authorities didn't know what to do. As you will remember, it was only after his visit that they clamped down. I think I remember our Ambassador saying to Chris Patten at one stage, "you must remember, Minister, that in China a demonstration of a million people is not really very large." Was I wrong in thinking that that chap had somehow missed the point? A million at the command of the authorities is very small, but something like that was completely unprecedented. Anyway, I think that probably gave him his enthusiasm to take on the Governorship of Hong Kong later.

MM: It certainly gave him a challenge.

IB: Yes, it was very interesting indeed. Much of these later years involved negotiations over the replenishment or capital expansion of the RDBS. This included the enlargement of the African Bank to include non-regional countries, and its capital increase; without this the Bank could not have gone on borrowing from the markets. We sanctioned a large lending programme, despite the reservations of the Canadians – who were in the end proved right, since the number of defaulting countries grew, and the Bank's loans became part of the general later African "debt crisis".

The IADB again

However, the most tortuous problems arose in the Inter-American Bank. Once again it was because of opposing views from the USA and the big Latin shareholders. This Bank, like others, was required to ignore political considerations in its work; but the Americans were determined, if they could, to stymie any proposed loans to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. (Cuba was never a member, so that problem did not arise.) They put forward a mechanism under which a loan could be delayed indefinitely. The Latins were not having that. Meeting after meeting went by and no progress was made. The Bank's Mexican President, Ortiz Mena, was quite ineffectual at breaking this deadlock, and eventually he had to go. In his place we elected the energetic and highly-respected Uruguayan, Enrique Iglesias – it was said that he could have been President of Uruguay, but was disqualified because he had been born abroad, in Spain. Enrique consulted the non-regionals, and we did our best, but still to no effect. Finally I had the idea of combining the two proposals, and offering the objecting country a choice between the rival procedures, which each had elements from the other. To sell this however I had simply to “give” it to both sides without claiming ownership, and then prevent the Bank staff from trying any version of their own – as they wanted to do. So it became an idea which the two sides themselves brought up. This worked very well – not least since everybody knew that the UK and its constituency had really thought up the solution. I was a bit taken aback, however, to get a special personal letter of thanks afterwards from the Dutch Minister who was then acting as Chairman of the Board of Governors.

These negotiations went along side by side with the usual formal Annual Meetings of all the Banks, at which every Governor made a speech on traditional lines, reviewing the year's progress and marking the issues on which his or her country placed special importance. Inevitably these were repetitious and usually pretty dull. In the IADB however it was worse, because that meeting were always attended by throngs of commercial bankers, and they were usually interested in only two speeches – by Brazil and by the USA. The unfortunate Governor who had to speak directly after either of these suffered the noisy exit of more than half the audience. During this stalemate period I was the unlucky one who had to follow Brazil. I determined that I should avoid the usual fate, so I began not with the usual thanks to the host, etc. but

by declaiming, in ringing tones, the passage from Ecclesiastes which starts “There is a time for everything under the sun; a time to be born, and a time to die”... etc. I used this to underline that we had had enough of the manoeuvres over the replenishment and it was now time for those arguing to settle their dispute and save the Bank. The effect was most gratifying, although of course when I got to the dull bits the audience seeped away as usual – but quietly.

The European Bank

Early in 1990 I expected to coast gently down the year to my retirement at the end of May, except for the usual Regional Bank meetings. Instead, I found myself over nearly every weekend at the Trésor in Paris, sorting out the charter and guiding principles of the EBRD. This had been mooted by Mitterrand in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the de-Stalinisation of Eastern Europe. So far I think it has turned out a solid success.

My political and Treasury colleagues spent their time arguing over the main strategic features the Bank would have - its remit, the composition of the Board of Directors, voting structures and so on. But I and my people saw that there would be a need for a full-scale Charter, much better than the stingy model being tabled by the French. We retired to a back room for two days, and then produced a complete draft, based on the best provisions in all the Regional and World Bank Charters. We just finished it in time to put it in before the meeting closed. Our French Trésor colleagues were delighted, as they knew how defective their earlier text had been. We were promptly included in a joint secretariat to finalise everything. I was able to get Sylvia Jay, Michael’s wife, set aside to do this between our sessions as she was really an ODA officer, for whom no other interesting job was available. It gave her extremely useful *entrée* to all sorts of people whom she might not otherwise have come to know, and I think this will have helped both her and Michael when he became our Ambassador in Paris.

Conclusion

Looking back over my career, I have been tremendously fortunate, in so many ways. I had the privilege of taking part in a great and morally worthy effort to help those peoples for whom Britain held responsibility to look after their own affairs. If the social and economic advances we were pioneering were, in the end, out of kilter with the political, that was not by and large our fault. Continuing this work after their independence through our aid and development work has logically followed. My experiences in Kenya and Tanzania, and the negotiation of the East African Community, were not only fascinating in themselves, but taught me a huge amount about how people actually live, how other cultures affect the problems our world faces, and how we all manage, and sometimes muddle by, in our relations with each other, as we try to “build a better world” – an idea rarely attained even in part.

In the process I have lived in and briefly visited many fascinating places. Apart from the thrill of living for so long in Africa, and getting to know more closely so many of its folk, I cherish a kaleidoscope of other memories. The IFIs, in particular, for all their sometimes predictable and occasionally tedious work, have a continuing – now, in the recession, maybe an even larger – role to play in the common human endeavour.

These IFI meetings always included a cultural or similar event to mark the occasion. Perhaps the grandest of these was the 1989 meeting of the IADB in Amsterdam, where the Dutch dined us all under the gaze of Rembrandt’s “Night Watch” in the Rijksmuseum, following this with a private tour. The most remarkable was certainly at Kyoto, where those negotiating the IDA Replenishment were taken to visit a Zen-type monastery and to eat there with its Abbot. It turned out that the Japanese Vice-Minister for Finance had himself been a monk at this monastery. Not a likely career for any of our senior Treasury colleagues in London! The cultural events included several operatic or other musical events, including a chunk of Verdi’s “Masked Ball” in Montreal – which I felt perhaps a bit on the edge, as it was attended by Canada’s Governor-General, and the “North American” version of the opera ends with the assassination of the British Governor [instead of the King of Sweden]. In Caracas, a splendid concert that included the “Hallelujah Chorus” was followed by all mingling

in the bars below, and I found myself encouraging the Venezuelan bass to launch into various bass operatic roles. In Miami, by contrast, the Americans laid on a short ballet done to canned music; but it was in a grand cinema from the high days, including a revolving sky, rising organ and the most extraordinary decor.

Dealing with the IFIs was particularly challenging, but I knew that there what we were negotiating would have a real impact on the ground – unlike some of the words over which we wrestled at endless UNCTAD and similar international meetings. These last reminded me often of Francis Bacon’s rather cynical remark: “Words are but the counters of wise men; they are the money of fools”. Nevertheless, even there, ideas could grow and lead eventually to action – as in our aid debt initiative. I got quite good at negotiating tactics, such as bracketing texts put up by the other side (whatever that was), even when they were acceptable, just in order to be able to “trade” them later for other wording, much more important to us. I also learnt from the CIEC in Paris how to foresee the later likely course of discussion, and to prepare for it from the start. For instance I learnt always to listen carefully to what others were saying and to note down any phrases which we might recycle, to our own advantage, in what we ourselves eventually said.

One lesson from all the international work is the huge advantage Britain has as the custodian of the international working language. I found time and again that exploring its subtleties gave me a clear edge in detailed arguments over drafting. It is rather disconcerting now to see the way our past rigour in English has deteriorated, even in the BBC, to sloppy and ambiguous phrases. Even the difference between “may” and “might” is ignored. We should seize on this growing weakness before it is too late, or we shall lose our pre-eminent diplomatic place in the world.

Transcribed by Joanna Buckley, June 2008

The Fight for Equality in the British Civil Service
Note by Ian Buist, C.B.

Prologue

1. These notes recount events, as I saw them, in the struggle to gain acceptance of fully equal rights for homosexual (gay and lesbian) staff within the British Home Civil Service and the Diplomatic Service, as documented in my attached personal papers, which I am depositing in the archives at the L.S.E.

2. Some general and personal background is necessary. Following the flight of Burgess and MacLean to the Soviet Union, and the progressive unearthing of other security-cleared staff (some of whom were homosexual) and the link seen with the "Cambridge Ring", the authorities took the view that homosexuals (they meant men) were automatically a security risk. They were of course exposed to blackmail if caught in homosexual activity, as that was against the law despite the recommendations of the Wolfenden Committee (1957). In 1962, following the exposure and conviction of John Vassall, the report of the Radcliffe Commission led to the introduction of a general system of "positive vetting", designed to weed out potential traitors and, through thorough checks on an individual's background, to eliminate anyone who might be susceptible to untoward "pressures". This was made standard and applied to all senior and many other posts in both the Home and Diplomatic Services. Successful PV opened the way to promotion to the many senior posts in which secret or similar knowledge is essential for the job to be properly carried out. Its withholding means that staff hit a "glass ceiling" and effectively have no long-term career prospects in the Service.

3. This situation did not change when the criminal law was partially reformed in 1967, despite the obvious fact that the risk of blackmail was thereby much reduced. The Establishment had a picture of homosexuals as basically "unstable", in their believed sexual adventurism as much as in their intrinsic character. Thus homosexuality was seen and treated as a "serious character defect", and the discovery, or revelation, of anyone's homosexuality led automatically to the withholding of clearance (and often, reputedly, to encouragement to seek a career elsewhere). (It did not help that right from its outset the Wolfenden Committee was set up to examine the law on "homosexuality and prostitution" - as though these two were directly comparable, and indeed possibly linked.)

4. By the start of my 30s, the idea that I had formed that my attraction to other men was purely "a delayed phase" could no longer be sustained. (I had not discovered it until I was 18.) In autumn 1962, aged 32, I was sent on an eight months' assignment to Dar-es-Salaam on secondment to the Diplomatic Service to look after our technical assistance programme to Tanganyika and other soon-to-be-independent States. I thereby escaped, with relief, the pressure I had felt building up for me to lay active suit to a very good friend and to propose to her. As things turned out, my stay in

East Africa was lengthened first to two years, and then to seven in all, and it was late 1969 before I returned to my parent Ministry. I brought with me a good African friend with whom I had formed a close relationship, in the desire that this might continue at least as long as his intended study time in Britain (after which I believed it right and inevitable that he should return to East Africa).

5. I had had the opportunity, on the dissolution or dismemberment of the Colonial Office, to apply to join the Commonwealth Relations Office (then still separate from the Foreign Office). Because I saw that this would inevitably involve PV, and because I believed in "aid work" (as it was becoming known), I did not apply. But by the time of my return, the law had been changed and I knew I would have to be PV'd. I decided that I must tell the truth about my orientation and my (exclusive) relationship.

6. Consequently I volunteered this information to the Security Service at my PV interview and stressed my view that with the change in the law I could not be exposed to any risks. Waiting for the decision of the authorities thereafter was one of the most stressful periods in my life. I knew that my work was valued and that I was regarded as a high-flyer. I expected that I would not be allowed clearance, and considered both how to react and how to take things forward - if at all - thereafter. I had already determined that I would refer to the duty of trust operating both ways - they wanted to be able to trust me, but I had a right to be able to trust them.

7. Finally my Permanent Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Wilson, called me up and told me that though the Security Services had recommended denial of clearance he was prepared to allow me to be cleared. The relief was overwhelming. But before I left the room Sir Geoffrey asked me whether I belonged to any (gay) clubs. (Most certainly, he already knew that I belonged to one, and had I said "no" he would have reversed his decision.) I told him of two, and offered him details if wanted (they were not required). When I asked why he wanted to know, he said that "hostile agents frequented such places to see if they could find any useful contacts". I said that if any approaches were made to me I would most certainly report them straight away to the Security Services. With that I was free to carry on.

8. By late 1974 I had served five years as an Assistant Secretary (Head of Department) and, considering the Noyes case (see below), decided to seek an explicit promise that I would be treated on exactly the same criteria as other (heterosexual) officers in consideration for promotion to any subsequent Under-Secretary position, without any discrimination. After some delay I received the assurance I wanted but it was couched only in ad personam terms (see first paper in the batch). I was told privately afterwards that, as Under-Secretary posts formed a common core throughout Whitehall, other Permanent Secretaries had had to be consulted and argument had raged fiercely, most wanting no assurance given. To this my Permanent Secretary had pointed out that there was no reasonable excuse he could give for refusing it, and as it was his decision he would go ahead. (The Overseas Development Ministry/Department

was, fortunately, not central enough to the Whitehall machine for the matter to be referred to Ministers.) Everyone knew, however, that when you say something "is not a precedent" or "does not express a general policy" you are trying to delay summer by saying it is only a few swallows ...

The Seventies

9. In 1972 I had joined the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE), taking care to let the Establishment Officer know so as to avoid possible accusations that I would be joining a political organisation. Some of my activities in CHE are recorded separately in the archive on the CHE Wandsworth/Richmond Group. I strongly believed that the right way to achieve change was for all of us to work within whatever social organisations and groups we might belong to - people who already knew and perhaps respected us, and also bodies who recognised our legitimate right to speak out. The "GLF" idea of an anti-family, anti-Establishment social revolution seemed to me unlikely to produce change for the better.

10. For the first few years of CHE's national life the outstanding preoccupation was to secure changes in the criminal law. But other issues were not neglected, the more so since it was obvious that changing public opinion could only be done by a much broader strategy. In 1974, at the Malvern Conference, I made contact with one or two others who were in the Civil Service, most notably Ralph Noyes, who had been discriminated against, even though already being an Under-Secretary, when he made his true orientation known. All the relevant papers in my possession are in this bundle. We began to lobby the Civil Service trade unions and the Whitley Council Staff Side to take up the general issue. I had considerable correspondence with the First Division Association, and Dermot Quirke (a very active member of Wandsworth/Richmond) lobbied the Society. Others tackled the CPSA etc. By April 1978 things had moved so far as at last to force the Civil Service Department to issue a policy statement. It was unsatisfactory, and moreover it did not rule out discrimination against gay and lesbian officers in some posts for reasons other than "security". In August, thanks to pressure through the unions, a "clarification" was issued, which advanced things a bit more. But there was a danger that the unions would rest on this and not act vigorously as individual cases arose.

11. I had surprisingly few private intimations from gays and lesbians in the Service, seeking advice etc. (many remained strictly closeted, fearing that their own Departments and managers would prove a tougher obstacle than, apparently, had been the ODM/ODA). However, the case of Richard Savage in 1976-78 showed what an uphill task still remained (see papers on file). CHE had set up a contact group for civil servants - there are some references to this. I decided that the only thing to do was to try to get the FDA to adopt a tougher policy on the issue at its Conference on 3 May 1979.

The FDA Conference

12. The ODM FDA Branch held a meeting before Conference and this was attended by the ?General Secretary of the FDA, who was anxious to

receive motions from branches. I proposed, to general support, a motion on the issue. Somewhat taken aback, the FDA General Secretary demanded that this be written down and submitted at once, which I duly did (years of rapid drafting experience tell ...) All motions submitted are circulated to every branch, so this made it necessary for all to discuss their attitude on discrimination against homosexuals. The motion congratulated the Executive on its general stance but called on it to pursue detailed issues of concern (see text and papers).

13. I prepared for the Conference as thoroughly as I could, using experience gained at the often contentious CHE Conferences. I had a hand-out, distributed to every seat, to explain what it was all about, and provided notes for the Press. On 3 May it became apparent that not all would be plain sailing. Our motion was placed last on the agenda, despite preceding others in the issued list. There was a clear danger - and probable intention - that it, with any other unfinished business, would be remitted to the Executive. AIT Sheffield had put up an amendment deleting all the detailed stuff and simply endorsing the general principle of no discrimination. (This turned out to be extremely helpful.) During the lunch-break one of the Executive sought me out and said in no uncertain terms that the motion would not get through. Business dragged on interminably. After lunch I therefore took a leaf out of CHE's book and demanded the suspension of Standing Orders to allow all business to be taken on the floor. (I don't think any such manoeuvre had ever been tried before.) The motion failed, but not before the Chairman had promised to move as speedily as possible so as to allow everything to be discussed before the scheduled end.

14. The Executive of course were relying on the passage of the amendment, which would make the motion harmless by not committing them to any further action. By a huge stroke of luck, however, I bumped into the AIT Sheffield delegate over tea. He said they had only put their amendment forward because they thought we were trying to pursue some individual case(s). When I explained that this was not so, and that we were concerned with general issues, he said he did not think in that case that they would put their amendment. So it turned out - giving the Executive a very nasty shock. The motion was overwhelmingly carried and we went home in triumph. Outside, Margaret Thatcher was being elected Prime Minister ...

The Eighties and beyond

15. The Thatcher era was not a promising time for legal reform, leading up as it did to the intolerable insult of "Section 28" (the struggle over which gave birth to Stonewall), and being increasingly overshadowed by the growing threat from AIDS. But it proved possible to press other aspects of civil life. The Civil and Public Services Gay Group was firmly established and its Newsletter (in folder) shows that even in 1979 lobbying of the main unions was building up well. My own first task was to keep the FDA up to the mark (see correspondence). The much wider row over the disclosures about Sir Anthony Blunt and Philby, plus allegations over Sir Roger Hollis, led to Mrs. Thatcher's decision in March 1981 to announce a review by the Security (Diplock) Commission of all

the procedures and practices, to see whether any changes were needed. This gave us, and the unions, the opportunity to put in evidence and press for an alteration of policy on the status of homosexuality as a presumed "character defect".

16. The Diplomatic Service. It also gave an opening to press for reform of the system and practice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This had a separate "top people's union", the Diplomatic Staff Association; the FDA represented only members of the Home Civil Service. My initial approaches (as a former diplomat) were not encouraging, as the DSA were reluctant to take up the cudgels. I therefore wrote to make suggestions about how gay and lesbian staff could be openly deployed in much of the world without any adverse consequences.

17. I had a personal, as well as a general, reason for opening up this front. In December 1980, when the Thatcher Government created a "closer union" between the FCO and the former Overseas Development Ministry, several functions were unified and my own role was enlarged to give me responsibility for UK relations with several UN bodies, including UNESCO. The arrangements were to include my being appointed as non-resident Ambassador to that organisation. But before they were announced, I was told that they had been changed. Although I would still direct policy, no Ambassador would be appointed, and there would be a resident Minister in Paris working under me. When I queried whether this change was due to my sexuality, my Permanent Secretary told me that it was, "although they will never admit it in public." Some slight Press interest is taken on Ambassadorial appointments and a CV is normally issued by the FCO. I had also mentioned my membership of CHE in my "Who's Who" entry. (See note in my papers.)

18. This bore no comparison to the much more harmful setbacks inflicted on so many others in the Service, but it meant losing the ceremonial title of "Ambassador" which many foreign colleagues insist on applying even after the person in question has left his post; nor could I take the Palace trail for the ceremony of "kissing hands". However, all that meant was having to forego the social icing on the cake. This was the only time I knowingly experienced discrimination in my own career. By contrast, when my beloved life partner was drowned on holiday in Pakistan in 1988 I was treated with great sympathy, awarded compassionate leave to go and try to recover his body, and given help by our High Commissioner in Pakistan, at the instance of my Department; I was allotted an official Land-Rover for the first weekend (for which I paid) and the High Commissioner himself saw me and my friends personally and encouraged us.

19. The Diplock Report. This came out early in 1982 (Cmnd 8540). It recommended some moves in our direction, but fell far short of what was required. "Male homosexual inclinations or relationships should not necessarily be treated as an absolute bar for PV clearance, but should be dealt with on a case by case basis, paying particular attention to whether the way in which the individual has indulged his homosexual tendencies casts any doubt upon his discretion or reliability." (The extraordinarily

insulting, if traditional, way in which this is put was characteristic still of top thinking.) I helped to push the FDA and the Staff Side into criticising the inadequacies of the new policy, which of course meant that there was still no guarantee to anyone of clearance, because there were no guidelines published to govern the individual decisions made. Diplock, however, also recommended an end to the automatic need for PV clearance for Under-Secretary posts and above, and made some concessions on procedure (eg those refused clearance to get a written statement of the allegations against them - though not of their source! - if they decided to appeal. Naturally, it was impossible to change the Government's decisions on acceptance of the Report.

20. By 1987 the FDA had evidence of several of its members being refused clearance, despite not being promiscuous and/or having a stable relationship. (Since the 1979 decision they had acted with much energy in its pursuit.) They met the Head of the Service, Sir Robert Armstrong, who promised to remind all Departments of the terms of the Diplock recommendations but offered no advance upon them (letter of 7 August 1987). The following year, however, the issue of Equal Opportunities enforcement within the Civil Service began to receive attention and all Departments were urged to produce detailed statements of their policies by the Civil Service Department (March 1988). The CSD note made clear that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation was banned, and harassment on those grounds was a disciplinary offence. However, homosexuals were not recruited to the Diplomatic Service or PV posts overseas "since homosexual acts remain punishable under other countries' laws". The FDA and other unions pursued the issue of discrimination against homosexuals under this flag. Many Departments, including my own, were slow to follow the CSD guidance, and had to be chivvied along.

21. In September 1989 the DSA at last joined in the battle and sent an excellent note to the FCO Chief Clerk arguing that discrimination must go. (It also picked up several of the points I had made in 1982.). I understand privately that John Major, during his short tenure of the Foreign Secretary's post, was extremely impressed by the arguments and ordered a review of policy on the basis of "why not?" rather than "let's keep the status quo as long as possible".

22. Early in 1990 a Scottish judge was required to retire because of his orientation, and this drew adverse Press comment. Dr. Gavin Strang MP put down a series of Questions on a wide range of issues affecting equality for homosexuals. Replying to him in June 1990 John Patten, Home Office Minister, reiterated the 1988 doctrine of the CSD but underlined the exceptions constituted by the Foreign Service and the armed Forces.

23. In July 1990 Mrs. Thatcher announced a restructuring of the security vetting system, and its future operation according to defined and published criteria. This did not, however, improve the declared policy towards homosexuals. The FDA took up cases of individuals refused clearance for posts in Brussels (these are normally seconded from a range of Home Departments) and pressed the Head of the Service, now Sir

Robin Butler, for clarifications and improvements. However, they did not receive much backing from the other unions.

24. The dam bursts. On 23 July 1991, at last, we were through. Mrs. Thatcher had gone, and her successor as Prime Minister (John Major) announced that in future "in the light of changing social attitudes towards homosexuality in this country and abroad, and the corresponding willingness on the part of homosexuals to be open about their sexuality, their lifestyle and their relationships....there should be no posts involving access to highly classified information for which homosexuality represents an automatic bar to security clearance" except of course for the armed Forces. Susceptibility to blackmail or pressure by a foreign intelligence service would continue to be a factor, with an individual assessment in each case.

The years since

25. I retired from the Service in May 1990 on reaching 60. There was still much tidying up to be done, but lesbian and gay groups within the various unions continued to grow, and the unions remained vigilant over individual cases and their implications. In early 1995, the whole vetting system was replaced by a new system of "security checks" and "developed vetting". The Staff Side and the FDA pressed for an amnesty for those who had previously escaped attention in PV posts and now wished to come out. They also objected to the intrusive nature of much vetting and the continued linking in practice of sexual orientation to "unreliability". They pressed for more consistency between Departments. In 1997 the FDA affiliated to LAGER. The TUC LGB Network grew in strength, and now holds regular Conferences.

26. However, the end of this story really comes in February 1999. MI6 then revealed that it was recruiting gay and lesbian staff, and had already sent its first homosexual couple abroad. MI5 was also reported to have recruited gay employees (and, allegedly, to have advertised for candidates in the gay Press). With that, the circle surely closes. The policy decisions already taken are now further entrenched through the enactment (December 2003) of the Article 13 Regulations banning discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation for all employees, including the Government.

27. A personal note to end with. One of my proudest moments came at a social occasion in my former Department earlier this year. I was approached by someone I knew only slightly from some 30 years before. She wished to thank me for what I had done to help get things changed in the Diplomatic Service and elsewhere. "You cannot imagine how supportive the whole system is to people like me now..." Perhaps, therefore, I and others have achieved something which will stand the test of time. But the real lesson may be that as a result of openness, and at the loss of some "martyrs", it has proved feasible to work a change in public attitudes and opinions which would have been unthinkable only a few years ago.

Ian Buist

29 December 2003

“The Fight for Equality in the British Civil Service”
Statement of Clarification

Since I compiled this paper, some misunderstandings have arisen because of my careless drafting of especially paragraph 5. In particular, the friend from Africa to whom I referred wished to make the truth much clearer. I therefore asked him to prepare the note below, setting out his view of our friendship and some of its salient moments. His text appears below.

J. L. F. Buist, C.B. 16 May 2012

Statement

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1. It is quite true that my friend Ian is gay. **But that doesn't mean that I am – I am not.** People can be ordinary friends without being of the same sexual orientation **and that's how I felt things were between us. Probably Ian was more fond of me than I was of him but we got on well and I helped him with technical problems** and so on, which he appreciated. When he lived in Kenya he wanted to help our people, and decided to pay for several people's education, instead of just giving them money. **I was one of those people.** Others got help for their secondary schooling, and one for his course at Nairobi University. When Ian went back to Britain he also arranged for someone from Kenya to do two expensive University courses in the UK - a diploma at Leeds and a degree at Birmingham.
2. **Ian supported me for several years on courses at what was then the Nairobi Technical College. After three preliminary years, I wanted to do a City and Guilds course on radio and TV maintenance. That course was not available at the College or anywhere else in Kenya. With professional advice Ian arranged for me to go to Britain and take the course at what is now Kingston University. We always meant for me to return home after graduating, but then I decided to get married to AAA.**
3. AAA wanted to try and live in Britain instead of Kenya. Ian arranged and paid for her to come and stay several months with me here in London, to try it out. Afterwards Ian arranged again for her to bring her two children with her and he arranged housing for us for our first two years. (It has been said that he did all this somehow to allow a special

relationship to continue. That is rubbish. **AAA herself chose what we should do** – she didn't want either of the kids to have any relationship with their real fathers, and told me that BBB was my son.). **Since then Ian has helped my whole family in many situations, and it is a pity that some of them do not appreciate all that he has done for them."**