COLONIALISM: A REALISTIC APPROACH

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The most important task of our generation is that of finding patterns by which men who differ in race, religion, and economic outlook may live in peace and contribute to each other’s prosperity. This task is not essentially different from that which faced the founders of our Republic.

When Prime Minister Gladstone referred to our federal Constitution as “the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man,” he uttered a judgment in which, I dare say, few of his countrymen have ever concurred. Indeed, there have been years in our recent history when it would have been difficult to find many well-informed Americans to acquiesce in that valuation. Today, however, there is a growing disposition on the part of the American people to accept this judgment as a typically British understatement. Perhaps this is because of the eloquent lectures on government by foreign authorities which have, in recent years, contributed to the education of the American people. At any rate, the fact is that under this Constitution thirteen poor and weak states, divided in race, religion, and economic outlook, no one of them as populous or as powerful as Bulgaria or Ecuador, have created the most prosperous and the mightiest nation in the world, while at the same time the civil rights of the citizens of this nation have, despite minor setbacks in times of hysteria, been progressively enlarged. It is doubtful whether the history of the world shows another such chapter of expanding national strength going hand in hand with expanding freedom and democracy. It is therefore pertinent for planners of a postwar world who are interested both in prosperity and in democracy to consider what it was that endowed the Constitution of the United States with its peculiar strength as an instrument of intercultural integration.

I. ON THE REALISM OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

With some slight trepidation, I venture to suggest that a chief source of this strength was the profound political realism, or cynicism, of the people who drafted and adopted the Constitution of the United States, and that what our thinking about postwar colonial problems most needs is an effective dose of this classical American realism.

At a time when the science of economics was taking form, at the hands of Adam Smith, by reason of Smith’s willingness to begin with the unflattering and rather shocking hypothesis that men who buy and sell are guided chiefly by motives of private profit rather than by conceptions of “social welfare” or “just price,” the American colonists, taught in the school of bitter colonial experience, were prepared to make a similar assumption in the field of politics. The basic premises from which their political thinking and argument flowed were: (a) that human flesh is corruptible; (b) that power corrupts; and (c) that absolute power corrupts absolutely. They therefore set about not to devise those forms of government which would be most efficient in the hands of good
rulers, but rather to fashion those forms which would be most cumbersome and inefficient in the hands of bad rulers. The discrepancies between these two objectives are of the utmost importance. For it may well be that the form of government which is most efficient in the hands of tyrants—probably an executive dictatorship—is also the most efficient form of government that can be wielded by a wise and benevolent ruler. On the other hand, a cumbersome system of checks and balances, which has hamstrung some of the noblest efforts of the few truly great statesmen this country has produced, has also contributed mightily to the preservation of our democracy through long periods of bad or mediocre political leadership. Except for the years of Lincoln, this country did not have a single president of outstanding stature during the forty-eight-year period between the administrations of Jackson and Cleveland, and yet this was a period of sustained national growth and growing prosperity.

The difference between these two approaches to the problems of government has been much obscured by recent currents in our legal and political thinking, but it remains, I think, of fundamental importance. In Europe, from Plato to Machiavelli, and from Machiavelli to Stalin, the central problem of political thought has always been: What form of government is suited to the highest form of society? What form will best aid a great and wise ruler to rule greatly and wisely? This is the approach which many gifted immigrants to these shores, from Hamilton, with his ideal of “government by the rich, the well-born, and the able,” to Schurz, with his ideal of “government by civil service,” and from Schurz to Frankfurter, with his gospel of “government by experts,” have tried to in-

still into our body politic. Foreign observers from Bryce to Shaw and Laski have with rare unanimity criticized our Constitution as a “conspiracy against government,” criticized our government as hopelessly inefficient, and pointed out that it was almost impossible for a great American president, governor, or mayor to effectuate great reforms, except through the intervention of an unusual streak of luck. In recent decades a growing school of political science, dedicated to the ideal of “good government” and dominated by Professor John W. Burgess, Professor Ernst Freund, and other graduates of the University of Berlin, has maintained that only by conferring increasing powers upon executive or administrative agencies of government can we hope to eliminate stupidity, corruption, and inefficiency from the political scene. Under the influence of these doctrines American intellectuals have in recent years taken upon themselves what used to be the exclusive role of reactionary and anti-democratic elements, namely, the task of disparaging and ridiculing the legislative branch of government in order to uphold centralization of power and of responsibility in the executive.

There is undoubtedly a large measure of truth in all these criticisms of our traditional instruments of government, but what all these critics forget is that Americans (at least those who have not studied at the University of Berlin) have generally been more interested in avoiding the worst government than in achieving the best and have always been willing to get along with a government of checks and balances, bicameral legislatures, divided responsibilities, inalienable rights, limited authority, and red tape, thinking the sacrifice of a possible heavenly rule on earth more than compensated by the insurance against political tyranny which
these complexities and entanglements afford.

At the point where it becomes necessary to weigh the possibility of good government against the possibility of evil, an estimate of human nature becomes a basic determinant in our political judgment. If you think that elected rulers and their chosen appointees are likely to be good and wise, you will vote in favor of giving them a larger measure of power, and if you think that they are likely to be corruptible, you will vote to give them a lesser measure of that which corrupts. Wisely or foolishly (wisely, I think), the founders of our nation took a rather pessimistic or cynical view of the behavior of men in political office. Taking this view they bent their energies to fashioning instruments of government least likely to do harm rather than instruments most perfectly adapted to the doing of good. I think that an objective appraisal of the results compels the conclusion that their efforts were reasonably successful.

II. THE IDEALISM OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS

The thinking of civilized men on the subject of colonial relations has long been dominated by the ideal of expert administration of the affairs of backward peoples. Like most dominant ideas, this thought has about it an aura of self-evidence, and it is generally assumed that no rational alternative view of colonial relations is possible. The force of an idea like this is found not in the frequency with which it is proclaimed—for we seldom bother to enunciate that which no one challenges—or even in the terminology of “protectorate,” “encomienda,” “trust,” and “mandate,” which are the offspring of this idea, but rather in the fact that the ideal furnishes the unspoken framework for an extensive universe of discourse. When men disagree on the merits of a particular colonial relationship or institution or official, they are likely to appeal to different standards of administrative competence or to disagree in their appraisal of how closely a particular administration has approached an agreed standard. That which all parties commonly assume in this field of inquiry and controversy, the framework of their agreements and disagreements, is the value of government by experts. So far as I am aware, all the studies that have been made by investigators in the field of colonial relations have been directed to the problem of how a good and wise “mother-country” (presumably that of the investigator) may wisely and benevolently rule a dependent people.²

² Typical are the views expressed in A. H. Snow, *The Administration of Dependencies* (1902): “The general principles upon which the Council should be constituted are, it would seem, first, that it should always contain persons expert in the general art of government, persons expert in the science of the administration of dependencies and persons actually familiar with local circumstances and conditions in the dependencies, and second, that it should be so constituted as to be removed as far as possible from the influence of party politics” (p. 589).

“The only alternative which can justly be applied when popular government is impossible is, as has been seen, expert government” (p. 595).

“... Government of widely extended and scattered lands and populations through representative institutions is not to be the ultimate substitute for the administration of dependencies by Imperial States. On the contrary, administration of dependencies by Imperial States is the final and permanent substitute for representative Government, wherever Government must, in the nature of things, extend itself beyond the limits of lands occupied by a homogeneous population capable of self-government. . . .

“A State can have no higher ideal than to perform well its obligations as the Imperial State of a Federal Empire. To be at once both a Judge and a Ruler is to occupy the most exalted position conceivable, and, in its possibilities of territorial extent, the Federal Empire has no limits. The Imperial State in such an Empire may judge and control and equal-
I venture to think that the limitations of this idealistic view in the field of colonial affairs and intercultural relations generally can be illuminated somewhat by considering the history of a parallel idea in the field of our domestic politics. It is no far cry from the doctrine of government by experts in colonial possessions to the idea of government by experts in our domestic political affairs. It is scarcely a coincidence, I think, that the tradition of federalism, of rule by "the rich, the well-born and the able," was introduced into the politics of our nation by a scion of the white ruling class of the British West Indies, Alexander Hamilton. It is hard to see why wealth, race, and ability, if pertinent to the government of the British West Indies, should not be equally pertinent to the government of the United States. At least so Hamilton thought, and if we are tempted to dismiss his view as a product of class snobbery in its emphasis upon wealth and ancestry, it is only fair to recognize, as Hamilton did, that, whether we like it or not, the rich and the well-born are, in our age as in his, more likely to have adequate education and experience in affairs of government than those who are neither rich nor well-born. What Hamilton really stands for, in our political history, then, is expert government. This puts the opponents of Hamilton in the position of defending inexpert government. And I think it clear that their defense of inexpert government, which has become classic in our national political thought, is as applicable to colonial as to domestic affairs.

The classical opponent of Hamilton's principles, Thomas Jefferson, summarized his view of government in a message of advice to the Cherokee Indians, who were, in 1808, seeking to establish an elective form of government. "The fool has as great a right to express his opinion by vote as the wise, because he is equally free and equally master of himself." Contrast the works of Carl Schurz, who, as secretary of the interior, did more than any other secretary to destroy Indian self-government and substitute "government by experts": "The Great Father is a very wise man. He knows everything. If there is anything wrong with your agent, he will know it before either you or I know it."

Here is the essence of the difference between the Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian approaches to the problem of government. If government were chiefly a matter of wisdom, or technique, or efficiency, there would be no gainsaying the argument that governmental power should be given to those most capable to exercise it. Once grant that in colonial affairs the interests of the governed and the governors are identical, and there is no escape from the conclusion that power should rest in expert hands. But Jefferson's greatness, and the strength of the government which he helped to build, lay in the clear recognition that government is not chiefly a matter of wisdom, technique, or efficiency but is, above all, a matter of right; that right depends upon human purposes; that human purposes are basically diverse; and that governmental power inevitably creates in its holders aspirations that conflict with those of the rest of society.

These realistic or cynical assumptions can, I think, throw a new light on some of the old problems of colonial administration.

III. THE REALISTIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF COLONIALISM

To apply to the problems of colonial affairs, and to intercultural relations generally, the assumptions made by the authors of the federal Constitution, we must approach our problem with the assumption that consciously or unconsciously those who rule a "dependent" people will generally pay more attention to their own interests and advantages than to those of the people they rule and that they will place a larger estimate on the value of their contributions to the civilization of their "wards" than will the "wards" and at the same time will probably place a lesser valuation upon the material and spiritual returns which they receive than would be put upon these same commodities by the giver. Let us assume further that those who administer the affairs of people whom they regard as "inferior" will become enamored of the power they wield (if, indeed, they were not so enamored when they assumed office and responsibility) and will be loath to relinquish such power at any time. I believe that a good deal of factual evidence could be brought to bear in support of the accuracy of these assumptions. But, without attempting to prove this belief, let me offer it as a hypothesis to be tested in terms of the implications which we can draw from it in the analysis of contemporary colonial problems. These implications, I believe, will have an important bearing upon the issues of whether, in any given situation, a colonial relationship should be established or, having been established, should be abandoned, as well as upon the further question of how colonial institutions ought to be shaped and administered.

Colonial status is commonly justified today as a temporary institution designed to give way, in the long run, either to independence or to assimilation. The only difficulty with this theory is that, as John Maynard Keynes has observed, in the long run we are all dead. Certainly the process of terminating a colonial status in an orderly nonviolent manner is one of the most difficult of political operations.

The traditional approach to issues relating to the disestablishment of colonial status has been that the "expert" in the case, that is, the governing power, should make such decisions. This position runs into the difficulty that ruling powers seldom if ever voluntarily abdicate their power. The argument for the retention of authority will vary, from time to time, but the conclusion remains the same. The position taken by the holders of power is most commonly supported by means of four standard arguments.

1. If a great power is making a financial profit from its administration of a dependency, this proves that the administration is successful and should not be disturbed.3 Per contra, if it is suffering a loss, this is the clearest possible demonstration of the unselfishness of its administration, of the need for its continu-

3 "The official British colonial report is based upon the tacit assumption that growing revenues and exports are certain indices of the well-being of colonial society and of the well-doing of colonial government, complacently ignoring such matters as standards of living and the crushing out of the right of men to rise to place and power in their own society. A colonial revolt is put down?—Good! Now the orderly processes of government can proceed. In the face of such attitudes only constant vigilance can guard the independence of the mind and judgment" (Rupert Emerson, Malaysia [1937], p. 467).
ance, and of the distress that would follow upon its interruption.

2. If a dependent people has made progress, economically or culturally, under a given form of administration, nothing should be done to interrupt that progress. Per contra, if progress has not been made, this must be explained by the fact that the form of administration in effect has not been continued long enough to achieve its purpose.

3. If within a given area different native groups seriously disagree with each other, this demonstrates that they are not ripe for self-government, which could only bring chaos and civil strife. Per contra, if they do not have serious internal dissensions, they must be either totalitarian at heart or politically immature and, in either case, cannot be intrusted with the responsibilities of self-rule.

4. If a native group subsists on a low standard of income, it is plain that administration by a civilized country is needed to raise the standard of living. Per contra, if a native group seeks to derive a large income from its control of peculiar resources or strategic areas, administration by a civilized country is justified to prevent extortion. (How much financial aid would the natives of the Congo need if they received the fair value of the radium and rubber taken from their land, or the natives of South Africa, if their title to the Kimberley diamond mines were recognized?)

4 "The Act of Berlin of February 26, 1885, laid down certain useful rules (Articles XXXIV and XXXV) as to the assumption of a protectorate over territories on the coast of the African Continent and the conditions of occupation. These rules relate only to the rights of parties to the Act; they are silent as to the rights of the indigenous population in the land. It did not condemn the doctrine that such land if not occupied by a civilized state was res nullius, or prescribe the conditions upon which treaties relating to such land should be who, to this day, dreams that civilized nations should pay to the natives of Java or Brazil what rubber is worth to civilized man?)

All the foregoing considerations indicate that no nation can be an impartial judge of its own administration of colonial affairs. Objective judgment may possibly be secured from the natives concerned, for, as Aristotle long ago pointed out, one does not have to be a master of cooking to pass on the merits of a meal. Other alternative sources of objective judgment are no doubt available. For example, following the precept of Jesus, those nations that are themselves without colonies might be expected to render fair judgment on the adequacy of other nations' colonial arrangements. Or, conceivably, an international agency might be established in such a manner as to be capable of rendering impartial judgments on these questions.

Returning to our principle of political realism, we may observe that not only in determining the existence or abandonment of colonial status but also in actually carrying out a pledge of freedom, the power of government is a corrupting force.

In the first place, it is clear that any pledge or agreement depends for its validity upon the continued existence of the parties. To the extent, however, that any dependency relationship which has been assumed by agreement tends to destroy the autonomy of one of the contracting parties, it renders the original pledge or agreement unenforcible and illusory. This is why so often the treaties and agreements out of which colonial
relationships emerge come eventually to be viewed by later colonial administrators as merely anachronistic impediments to efficient administration, impediments which must be wiped out in the name of progress.\(^5\) It follows, then, that no agreement between a stronger and a weaker party can be of any permanent significance unless it guarantees the continued existence and autonomy of the latter.

Assuming that an obligation looking toward increased self-government has been assumed, and has not been repudiated, there remains the problem of how it can be enforced—which history shows to be a problem of the utmost difficulty. Where, within a framework of colonial administration, an over-all commitment to local self-government has been made by the political arm of the governing power, each functional branch of the colonial service may reasonably be expected forthwith, to the best of its ability, to obstruct the execution of such a policy. Each service is naturally likely to take the position: Self-government should be encouraged in general but not in the particular field of education, health, forestry, mining, agriculture, commerce, industry, banking, or police administration with which the particular colonial agency, bureau, or office is concerned, since these are, after all, technical matters requiring long training and expertise, on which it would be ruinous to introduce incompetent personnel, native factionalism, tribal politics, etc. Since each technical service has little to say, ordinarily, about self-government in general but a great deal to say about the transfer of its own powers, the net effect of this attitude is to obstruct all attempts by central authority to aid in the growth of native self-government, no matter how sincerely the latter end is sought.

From this one may deduce that the carrying-out of a decision to relinquish power cannot safely be left to the wielder of such power.

Perhaps the most practical safeguard against the indefinite expansion of services to a point where the servant becomes the master and self-government disappears is the establishment of definite time tables for the limitation and final relinquishment of supervisory powers. American experience with Cuba and the Philippines illustrates the possibility of meaningful agreements the force of which even the most expert adversely affected administrators have ultimately accepted. The establishment of such a time table is the first token of good faith in colonial relations, as the adherence to such a schedule is the surest foundation of continued mutual trust.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) "The major objection to the older type of treaty was that it tied the hands of the central government far too tightly and interposed barriers to its uniform regulation of matters throughout the whole of the Indies which could only be removed through a series of cumbersome negotiations with each of the States" (Emerson, op. cit., p. 449).

In the United States a similar attitude has appeared from time to time. In 1862 Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith criticized the policy of making treaties with Indians and advised Congress: "Instead of being treated as independent nations they should be regarded as wards of the government, entitled to its fostering care and protection" (Handbook of Federal Indian Law, p. 16). In 1872, arguments concerning national honor were met by the blunt retort of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Walker: "There is no question of national dignity, be it remembered, involved in the treatment of savages by a civilized power. With wild men, as with wild beasts, the question whether in a given situation one shall fight, coax, or run, is a question merely of what is easiest and safest" (ibid., p. 19). Fortunately, the Congress and the courts have taken a more responsible view of our treaty obligations, as is attested by the recovery in the last decade of more than twenty million dollars by Indian tribes on account of broken treaties.

\(^6\) See the dialogue between Gandhi and Carlos Romulo, reported in Romulo, Mother America (1943), pp. 116-17.
The special bias of the colonial administrator affects the character of colonial administration generally, no less than it affects judgments as to the establishment and discontinuance of colonial relations. Generally speaking, a colonial administration, whatever else it may do, will tend to act along lines that promote the aggrandizement of (a) itself and (b) the government of which it is a part.

The glorification of expert colonial administration by expert colonial administrators is a natural occupational disease. For one thing, any occupation inevitably tends to build up a system of values in which it occupies a role of central importance. This is particularly true of governmental occupations and is daily exemplified in the attitudes of judges toward lawyers and litigants, of military officers toward civilians, and of governmental administrators or “bureaucrats” toward those who depend upon their decisions. In all these relationships the public servant tends to act as a master, treating his employers as inferiors. This attitude is somewhat checked, on the domestic scene, by the social interdependence and intermixture of rulers and ruled. Every judge was once a lawyer and remains a potential litigant, but few experts on native administration were ever natives subject to expert administration or ever expect to be. Military officers and civilian “bureaucrats” depend for their emoluments and supplies upon a lay public and its lay representatives. But in a colonial atmosphere these great solvents of institutionalized snobbery do not ordinarily operate. Without interdependence and intermixture there is no natural check upon the tendency inherent in all institutions, as in all animals, to live and grow by devouring some part of the environment.

What we call “the drive to amplify jurisdiction” is but a manifestation of the impulse of every living thing toward self-aggrandizement. It is not a Machiavellian trait of sophisticated and power-hungry politicians but a perfectly natural by-product of human effort. Successive officials may be dominated by the most diverse objectives, selfish and unselfish; but, while these objectives may cancel out, that which is a common incident to all these objectives creates a pattern of cumulative growth almost as irresistible as the growth of coral reef. I think, for example, of an Indian reservation in Montana where one superintendent, who devoted great energies to setting up his charges in the cattle business, was followed by another who, equally devoted to the well-being of his charges, insisted on liquidating cattle enterprises and promoting sheep-raisings, while a third superintendent insisted on plowing up the prairie sod in order to make wheat farmers of his charges. (The fourth was an ardent cattleman and presumably started a new cycle.) Each of these superintendents, in order to carry out perfectly unselfish objectives, had to insist on (a) larger appropriations, (b) more extensive credit controls, (c) greater authority over his staff, and (d) greater power over obstructive or recalcitrant Indians. These, then, were the jurisdictional constants that determined the development of the office, while the specific conscious objectives all canceled each other out.

Where racial or class distinctions are part of the colonial picture, self-aggrandizement, personal or institutional, is fed by the myths of racial or class superiority.7 Those who are too wise, too modest,

7 “In 1858, after the Indian mutiny and at a time when the Straits Settlements were still administered as a part of the Indian Empire, Queen Victoria issued the famous—and habitually ignored—Proclamation in which it was laid down that ‘so
or too timid to assert boldly their own personal greatness may without censure dilate upon the greatness of the class or race to which they belong. Where educational or linguistic distinctions appear, the colonial administrator may develop a protective contempt for, or ignorance of, the judgments passed on his labors by those in whose service he is supposed to be laboring. If, by chance, a member of the administrator’s own class or race intervenes to voice a critical judgment or protest on behalf of the native population, the critic is likely to be denounced or ignored as a “grafter,” “paid agitator,” or “crank”—a “grafter” if he receives a material reward from the natives, a “paid agitator” if he receives a reward from some other source, and a “crank” if he receives no material reward at all. The patterns of colonial administration contain many effective defenses for reducing the efficacy of such champions of the underdog.8

The cultivation of distinctions between the governing class and the governed is a widespread element in the mores of colonialism. The marks of peculiarity which distinguish the self-styled superior race in a native environment (e.g., formal European attire and avoidance of local foodstuffs) are likely to be officially cherished as badges of dignity.9 Thus the cost of living of col-

8 Cf. Worcester v. Georgia, 6 Pet. 515, for an account of how the state of Georgia treated missionaries who sought to defend Indian rights. And compare the treatment meted out to Fra Bartolomé de Las Casas, “Defender of the Indians” and bishop of Chiapas, by the anned landowners of his diocese. Before John Collier became Commissioner of Indian Affairs, he was excluded from Indian reservations, on occasion, when he attempted to aid in the defense of Indian rights, under the authority of an old statute (25 U.S.C. 222), since repealed, authorizing the removal from any Indian reservation of any person whose presence might, in the judgment of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, be “detrimental” to “the welfare of the Indians.” Of the Netherlands East Indies, Rupert Emerson writes: “The Governor-General retains (Article 18) the exclusive right to prohibit persons regarded as threatening the public peace and order from remaining in any State or to assign to such persons a definite place of residence outside the State” (op. cit., p. 453). Of British Malaysia the same writer declares:

“Dating back for some three-quarters of a century the heart of the Banishment Ordinance as it now reads in the Straits is contained in the following statement: Whenever it appears to the Governor in Council, after such inquiry as he deems necessary, that the removal from the Colony of any person, not being a natural-born subject of His Majesty, is conducive to the public good, the Governor in Council may issue an order banishing such person from the Colony for such period and generally in such manner as to the Governor in Council seems expedient.’ In the Malay States equally broad statutes have been adopted, empowering the ruler, when called upon by the Resident or Adviser, to rid the State of any person whose presence is regarded as undesirable. Since these provisions are hedged about with virtually no formal safeguards and appeals to the courts are ruled out, the sweeping character of the powers thus conferred is obvious” (ibid., p. 508).

9 The British Colonial officer in Africa who dresses for dinner with himself has come to symbolize
nial service employees is often raised to a point where only the very wealthy or very irresponsible can afford colonial careers, and the gulf between governed and governors is artificially widened, while, at the same time and by the same token, the possible economic and spiritual contributions of the native culture to European civilization are systematically undervalued. For decades many Europeans in this country tried with little success and much starvation to maintain European customs in agriculture as in other aspects of life; prosperity came to those groups that had enough cultural resilience to accept the Indian agricultural patterns built around corn, beans, potatoes, tobacco, and cotton.

No discussion of the mores of colonial administrators would be complete without reference to the quaint idea of self-government which is so perennially popular in colonial office circles, the idea, namely, that vesting power in a group of natives selected by the colonial administrator is equivalent to self-government. This attitude, which, perhaps more than anything else, made the Cripps mission to India so futile a performance, is the source of what is called “company unionism” in industrial relations and “indirect administration” in colonial affairs. It is a typical example of what logicians call the genetic fallacy to suppose that the nature of a man’s political responsibilities is in any way determined by his racial origins. To a realist it is plain that a white man employed by Zulus and responsible to Zulus is an instrument of Zulu government, while a dozen Zulu princes picked by a British official and removable by that official are instruments of British, not Zulu, sovereignty.

Cynicism, however, must not be one-sided. The diseases of colonialism are not limited to those who govern. Those who are governed develop equally stubborn and serious maladies. Chief among these maladies are: (1) native toadyism, in which the native politician secures crumbs of power by adopting the usual habits of lickspittles, sycophants, and courtiers; (2) blablaism, in which natives aspiring

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“11“For the imperialist Powers there can be no doubt that indirect rule as it is practiced in Malaysia brings with it not inconceivable advantages. In the initial stages of colonial expansion in which the Dutch still find themselves in some parts of the outer islands of the Indies, as do the British to a lesser degree in the northern Malay States, it serves as a cheap and simple means of exerting control over peoples whose traditional way of life it is not yet possible or necessary to disturb on any large scale. . . . More generally in the later stages of imperialism it serves as a highly efficient device for breaking up and segregating potential nationalist movements and as something of a moral justification for denying the claims to power of the more advanced elements in the native society. . . . Its cruelest aspect is no doubt neither its open brutalities nor its exploitation of peoples—the peoples brought under its domination have usually not been ignorant of either brutality or exploitation prior to its coming—but rather that it holds so tenaciously in its own grasp the keys to the new scientific power over man and nature whose existence it has made manifest to the peoples it rules and through which it is able to dominate them. Precisely those native leaders who are most peculiarly its own product and who have reached out for the keys of its own power it must most ruthlessly suppress as constituting the greatest menace to its own perpetuation” (Emerson, op. cit., pp. 518, 519).
to posts of leadership among their people, having no opportunity to demonstrate capacities for nonvocal behavior, are appraised, selected, and bred solely on the basis of the noises that come from their mouths; and (3) noitis, in which the patient, deprived of the opportunity of action, is reduced to a position of continuous objection to the course of administration.

A combination of the last two maladies generally produces a situation in which a depressed group will choose its leadership from those who most eloquently express the common distrust of the power that governs. To expect such a leadership to accept with joy promises of self-government, or of better conditions in the future, is childish. Apparently, however, Sir Stafford Cripps expected that Indian leaders who had attained their positions of leadership by warning their people not to trust the British, these warnings having been frequently substantiated by the course of events, could turn around to their followers and say, "The promises which the British now make are to be believed." In all probability the only rational approach to this type of situation is the immediate transfer of new realms of responsibility to native control. Such a solution not only does away with the need for trust in promises but also inevitably modifies the character of the native leadership by instilling the habits, tests, and responsibilities of actual administration and thus replacing leaders-in-discourse with leaders-in-action.

Our realism, finally, if it is to result in a balanced judgment, must extend to the alternatives to colonialism. Do the "Banana Republics" of Central America present a fitting ideal toward which peoples now held in colonial subjection are to aspire? Why is it that force of re-

action in domestic politics (Edmund Burke and W. R. Hearst, to take two notable examples) often throw their support to independence movements of subject peoples? The answer to both questions is to be found, I think, in a recognition of the fact that economic imperialism is not necessarily dependent upon, and is sometimes even hindered by, political imperialism. Where such hindrances arise it will be to the interest of the economic imperialists to eliminate the political phase of colonialism.

The bargaining between representatives of an advanced commercial economy, on the one hand, and aborigines, on the other, is generally marked by extreme differences in (a) technology, (b) understanding of costs and values, (c) power to enforce promises, (d) attitudes toward sentimental or intangible values, and (e) control over, and concern for, the future. By reason of these differences enterprising representatives of the more advanced economy can generally manage, in time, to secure most of the property of the aborigines in exchange for a very modest return, unless forcibly restrained from doing so.

The inequality of the bargaining process may be accentuated by the use of liquor, physical coercion, the bribing of native rulers, the financing of palace revolutions, or more subtle forms of interference in local politics; but even without these aids the inequality of bargaining power that is based upon a wide disparity in technology leads inevitably to exploitation unless such bargaining is subjected to effective restraints. Four sources of such restraint may exist: (a) a regime of free competition, in which competitive bids raise the price of native property or native labor to world commercial levels; (b) restraints upon unequal bargaining exercised by the native
group;\(^{(c)}\) restraints upon unequal bargaining exercised by the political authorities of the alien group; and (d) controls of an international character. Where free competition and international authority do not exist and the leadership of the native group is unable or unwilling to restrict trade between natives and foreigners, the only restraint that the trading company need fear is that which may emanate from its own sovereign. In this situation, if its own sovereign is actually disposed to impose such limitations, a conflict is likely to arise between the trading companies and their own governments, the former seeking to avoid the limitations which the latter seek to impose. The history of European settlement in the New World is a history of four centuries of such conflict. Always there were Europeans seeking the gold, furs, and lands of the Indian either through a one-sided trade in which the Indian received “firewater,” firearms, or baubles for that which he conveyed, or through the simpler methods of brigandage. This side of the story of the conquest of America is well known. What is not so well known is the persistent effort of government to lay restraints upon such individual enterprise. From the issuance of the Papal Bull of 1537, which forbade the holding and selling of Indians as slaves, and the Laws of the Indies, which forbade private transactions in Indian land, down to the latest regulations of the United States government, prohibiting the sale of Indian lands to non-Indians and requiring leases of Indian minerals to be made only on competitive terms, a chief source of protection for the native against white exploitation has been the political arm of the white man’s society.\(^{(d)}\) And from the days when Fra Bartolomé de Las Casas was run out of his diocese by the exploiters to whom he brought the royal and papal guaranties of Indian rights, through the days when land-grabbers of Georgia and the Georgia courts, with the approval of a frontier president, defied the Supreme Court of the United States and insisted on imprisoning those who tried to enforce federal laws for the protection of the Indians, and on down to the present, when western miners, stockmen, and land-grabbers make regular efforts, in the name of Indian freedom to abolish all federal laws and agencies that protect Indian property, the struggle has raged between private exploiters of the Indian and government agencies. One may say that the desire of government throughout this struggle was to make the exploitation of the Indian a government monopoly, and there would be much truth in that analysis. But the fact remains that the attitude of governments has been generally dominated by considerations of long-range expediency, if not of justice, rather than simply by the considerations of immediate profit that most appealed to private exploiters.\(^{(e)}\) Thus the federal government

\(^{12}\) Consider, e.g., the law of the Cherokees which made negotiation by any private citizen of the Cherokee Nation for the sale of land to the United States a capital offense. This ordinance, adopted on December 2, 1842, appears as the first section of the Cherokee Criminal Code in the compilations of 1867, 1875, 1881, and 1892. The development of the boycott in Ireland, India, and China has introduced a nonpolitical form of native control that is destined to play a large role in the colonial problems of the future.


\(^{14}\) “In point of fact, imperialism as soon as it has undertaken the actual government of backward peoples has had to assume something of a duality of functions. The role of a colonial government, as Adam Smith pointed out oversharply in the Wealth of Nations, is even in some respects antithetical to
recognized at an early date that a dispossessed Indian offered a threat to the lives of innocent men and women and that defenses against such threats imposed considerable burdens upon the public treasury.\(^5\) Thus a matter of no special concern to the commercial trader was of serious concern to the government. Although changed conditions within the last five decades have eliminated the fear of Indian warfare, the dispossessed Indian continued to be a hazard or burden to the community, and thus the basic incentive for governmental protection of Indian property has continued, despite the strenuous efforts of private commercial interests to destroy that protection and despite the aid given that campaign by those who think government protection degrading.\(^6\)

Against this background of historical experience it would certainly be foolish to overlook the positive protection that

that of a colonial company of the order of the East India Companies. If the latter is in principle motivated solely by the drive for the largest and quickest profits, the former must to some degree foster the growth of more permanent wealth in the dependent area if only that it may levy the taxes which are its life-blood. . . . The most that can normally be expected of a colonial government within the framework of imperialism and in its direct relations with home capitalist interests is that it compel the latter in their own interest to accept the ultimate advantage of long-run over short-run profits; whence can be derived virtually the entire range of imperialist humanitarianism” (Emerson, \(op.\ cit.,\) p. 468).

\(^5\) During the nineteenth century it was estimated that it cost the War Department $4,000,000 to kill an Indian.

\(^6\) That “special aid and consideration” in our government’s relations with Indian tribes lead to “loss of self-respect and self-dependency”\(^3\) and should be promptly terminated is a thesis which Oswald Garrison Villard advances with considerable moral fervor in a recent article, “Wardship and the Indian,” Christian Century, XLI (1944), 397. Mr. Villard’s expressions of pious horror at the “Hitler-esque consciencelessness” with which we have disregarded Indian treaties and agreements in the political government may offer against the ravages of raw economic exploitation. It is highly improbable that United States rubber interests would be allowed to exploit the Liberians in the way they now do if Liberia were a colony of the United States; the fact that for other reasons neither Liberia nor the United States would want to establish any such political relationship does not detract from the evils of the present American corporate control over the Liberian economy; rather it contributes to those evils by giving American rubber interests the argument that any attempt by the United States to control their exploitation of Liberians would be an infringement of Liberian sovereignty and would further the exploitation of Liberian resources by non-American powers.

Political independence, then, is not an adequate answer to all colonial problems. Recognizing the distinction between economic and political dominance, we can formulate our basic problem in this way: How can we minimize the evils of political overlordship without increasing the evils of private economic exploitation?

In approaching the problem of colonial administration from the cynical or realistic standpoint which the foregoing remarks portray, no single formula can be mechanically applied to all situations to produce an adequate social solution. But certain limiting assumptions may serve to exclude some pretended solutions of colonial problems and thus to narrow the field to be explored in facing any given situation. These limiting as-
sumptions, or guiding principles, may perhaps be put concisely in something like the following terms.

PROPOSED PLANKS FOR A PEOPLES' CHARTER

1. A weaker people\(^\text{17}\) thrown into contact with a stronger may expect exploitation\(^\text{18}\) but will seek to minimize its duration and extent.

2. Exploitation may take either political or economic forms; maintenance of the forms of independence by a weaker power is no guaranty against economic exploitation. (Witness the "Banana Republics" of Central America.)

3. Commercial exploitation is generally more degrading than political exploitation, for an imperial state is normally responsible to the public opinion of its own citizens, while an imperial corporation is responsible only to the profit motive. (Cf., e.g., the Virgin Islands, a political dependency, and Liberia, an economic dependency.)

4. A weaker people can escape from exploitation only by acquiring added strength, i.e., a greater measure of control over the environment.

5. A people requiring services of civilization\(^\text{19}\) will seek to obtain such services at the lowest cost.

6. No state will offer or accept such services unless it expects to profit therefrom.

7. No power is morally obliged to govern the affairs of an alien people; no

people is morally obliged to submit to the rule of an alien nation.

8. No native people lacks the capacity to do that for itself without which it could not have survived as a people.

9. No people is so deficient in human capacity as to be devoid of the means of self-government; the choice of alien government can be justified only when an alien government is willing and able to render services of civilization unobtainable at lesser cost.

10. Any native people that requires technical instruction, access to capital, protection, or other forms of assistance in the development of its resources and in the mastery of modern technology, should be free without surrendering its autonomy to secure such assistance from other nations and agencies upon mutually agreeable terms.

11. There is no such thing as general superiority among cultures. A mandate for sanitation is not a mandate for language change.

12. Reciprocal benefit cannot exist in a colonial relationship except between a people desirous of receiving governmental services of a type it cannot provide for itself and a people capable of supplying such services for a reasonable consideration.

13. No government may properly do for a dependent native group that which the native group can do for itself.

14. The best human test of reciprocal benefit is mutual agreement.

15. The best judge of the value of a governmental service is the consumer thereof.

16. No government is wise enough or good enough to be an impartial judge of the value of its own colonial administration.

17. Self-government being itself the
highest political good of civilization, a 
sacrifice of powers of self-government\(^{20}\) 
can be justified only as a temporary 
measure.

18. The value of a colonial relation-
ship depends primarily upon the rate 
at which it works its own destruction.

19. No colonial relationship is ever 
terminated except upon the initiative 
of the dependent group.

20. There can be no guaranty that a 
colonial relationship will be temporary 
without the continued existence of the 
dependent group as a political entity 
capable of acting on its own initiative.

21. Political existence depends upon 
political functioning in the satisfaction 
of human needs.

22. Every native group possesses tra-
ditional means of maintaining order, 
controlling domestic relations, regulating 
the use and disposition of property, as-
sessing contributions of goods or services 
from the individual to the community, 
and bringing the opinion of the group to 
focus on vital problems; none of these 
functions can legitimately be suppressed 
or restricted by another power.

23. Acceptance of colonial status can-
not be justified unless a measure of politi-
cal autonomy is retained.

24. There can be no political auton-
omy unless a group is represented by 
agents of its own choosing.

25. Any agreement establishing a 
colonial relationship is illusory unless 
the weaker party maintains the capacity 

to insist upon the enforcement of the 
terms of its bargain.

26. Since no colonial relationship can 
be legitimately viewed as permanent, 
and since every majority begins as a 
minority, respect for democracy requires 
tolerance of the right of expression of all 
native minorities, including those that 
seek to terminate colonial status.

27. Since the disestablishing of an 
established colonial relation inevitably 
requires agitation and agitators, the 
good faith of a colonial power is to be 
measured by the freedom which it allows 
to agitators for independence.

28. Among agencies capable of render-
ing technical services of civilization, a 
weaker people may most safely employ 
those incapable of using force (e.g., In-
national Red Cross, International 
Labour Office, Universal Postal Union, 
international religious bodies, and pri-
ivate health research agencies).

29. Among nations equally equipped 
to render needed services of civilization 
to a native group, the native group can 
most safely turn to that power which, by 
reason of military weakness or otherwise, 
is least capable of turning its authority 
to oppressive ends.

30. Where services of civilization are 
sought from powerful nations, incentives 
to national aggrandizement can be 
minimized if such services are admin-
istered on an international basis.

31. No government which is in de-
fault in meeting existing obligations to-
ward a dependent people can be properly 
intrusted with new obligations.

32. The ultimate human court of ap-
peal in colonial affairs is the forum of 
enlightened and disinterested public 
opinion.

\(^{20}\) By “sacrifice of powers of self-government” I do not mean to include the voluntary acceptance of limitations on sovereignty which must inevitably accompany every broadening of the realm of government. Neither the members of a gipsy band nor the citizens of a great power lost political power by shifting their political allegiance, wholly or par-
tially, to a larger political unit.

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