

BRITAIN’S IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATORS, 1858–1966



Gul Hayat Institute

THE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Indian Civil Service

1858–1947

HERE ARE COMMEMORATED
THE CIVIL SERVICES
OF THE CROWN IN INDIA
LET THEM NOT BE FORGOTTEN
FOR THEY SERVED INDIA WELL

What doth the Lord require of thee
But to do justly and to love mercy

This Memorial Tablet was Unveiled by Her Majesty The Queen
6 March 1958

The Colonial Service

TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVED THE CROWN
IN THE COLONIAL TERRITORIES

Whosoever will be chief among you
Let him be your servant

This Memorial was Unveiled by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
23 March 1966

The Sudan Civil Service

1898–1955

TO COMMEMORATE THE WORK OF MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR RACE
WHO LABOURED TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE SUDAN

This Tablet was Erected 1960 Nisi Dominus frustra

(by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter)

Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966

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in association with
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN



First published in Great Britain 2000 by

MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London
Companies and representatives throughout the world

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-349-40724-8 ISBN 978-0-230-28632-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230286320



First published in the United States of America 2000 by

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC.,

Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

ISBN 978-0-312-22555-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kirk-Greene, A. H. M. (Hamilton Millard)

Britain's imperial administrators, 1858–1966 / Anthony Kirk-Greene.

p. cm. — (St. Antony's series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-22555-1

1. Great Britain—Colonies—Administration—History. 2. Colonial
administrators—Great Britain—History. I. Title. II. Series: St.
Antony's series.

JV1060.K565 1999

321'.08—dc21

99-15264

CIP

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2000 978-0-333-73297-7

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09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01 00

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Acknowledgements

This book represents one of two complementary studies of the generic District Officer, the symbol of colonial authority and the personification of imperial government. Both are designed for post-imperial readers who, in contrast to their parents' generation, have never encountered a serving imperial administrator in their life, and for whom a career which annually attracted hundreds of British graduates in search of Crown Service overseas has not been an option for the past half-century. This first volume, primarily an institutional history of the formation and function of the District Officer, draws on the official and secondary literature and the published memoirs on Britain's three overseas civil services, the Indian Civil Service, the Colonial Administrative Service, and the Sudan Political Service, each of which came to a close forty to fifty years ago. Such an analytical account will serve as a necessary background to the second volume, a collective portrait of the District Officer in Africa (where three-quarters of the Colonial Service worked), which will principally draw on personal experience and private papers. The first paints the scene; the second depicts the actors. The motivation of both volumes is to respond to the challenge posed, publicly, in Jack Simmons' inaugural lecture at the University of Leicester all of fifty years ago, 'The thing that interests me most of all in the history of the British Empire [is] the lives of the men who made it'; and, privately, in fellow imperial historian Reginald Coupland's virtually contemporaneous assertion that 'Personality is the really interesting thing in history.' In the interpretation of both these prescriptions, as in the construction of both volumes, it is the study of the generic District Officer of imperial administration that stands at the centre.

For the generous opportunities to research into and reflect on the generic DO I have a list of acknowledgements almost as long as the time I have been involved with the topic. At one end, for the final period of research and writing up I am deeply grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for their award of an enabling Emeritus Fellowship. At the other end, in temporal terms, I have drawn on my own career of four wartime years in the Indian Army and ten years as a District Officer in Northern Nigeria, a learning experience indispensable to this project and unrepeatable today. In the middle, as it were, from 1957 until my retirement in 1992, there was first the privilege of designing and directing the pioneer training course for potential Nigerian District Officers at the Institute of Administration at Zaria, soon incorporated into the Ahmadu Bello University; and then, from 1967, the stimulation of working with colleagues in Commonwealth History at the University of Oxford and the extensive support of my work given by the Warden and Fellows of St Antony's College. There were, too, rewarding insights and knowledge gained from my good fortune in having been Research Officer for the oral history programme of the Oxford

Colonial Records Project in 1967–73 and then from 1980 to 1984 the Director of its archive retrieval and collection successor, the Oxford Development Records Project. In between, there have been regular visits to a dozen ex-colonial territories; conferences and seminars and symposia with fellow imperial historians in America, Canada, Australia and Europe; and over forty years of invoking skilled guidance from long-suffering librarians, above all the staffs of Rhodes House Library and Queen Elizabeth House at Oxford, the Hoover Institution at Stanford, the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge, the Sudan Archive at Durham; and, in London, the former Colonial Office Library and Records, the India Office Library and Records (now moving to the new British Library buildings), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, the Royal Commonwealth Society (since moved to Cambridge), the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the Public Record Office, Kew.

Four expressions of personal gratitude remain to be recorded: to Margaret Matheson and Marie Ruiz, for their secretarial support; to Andrew Fairweather Tall and Richard Lofthouse, my research assistants; to Shehu Othman and Anne Rafique for their editorial assistance; and to my wife, Helen, who – quite literally – has enabled the whole writing of this book.

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List of Abbreviations

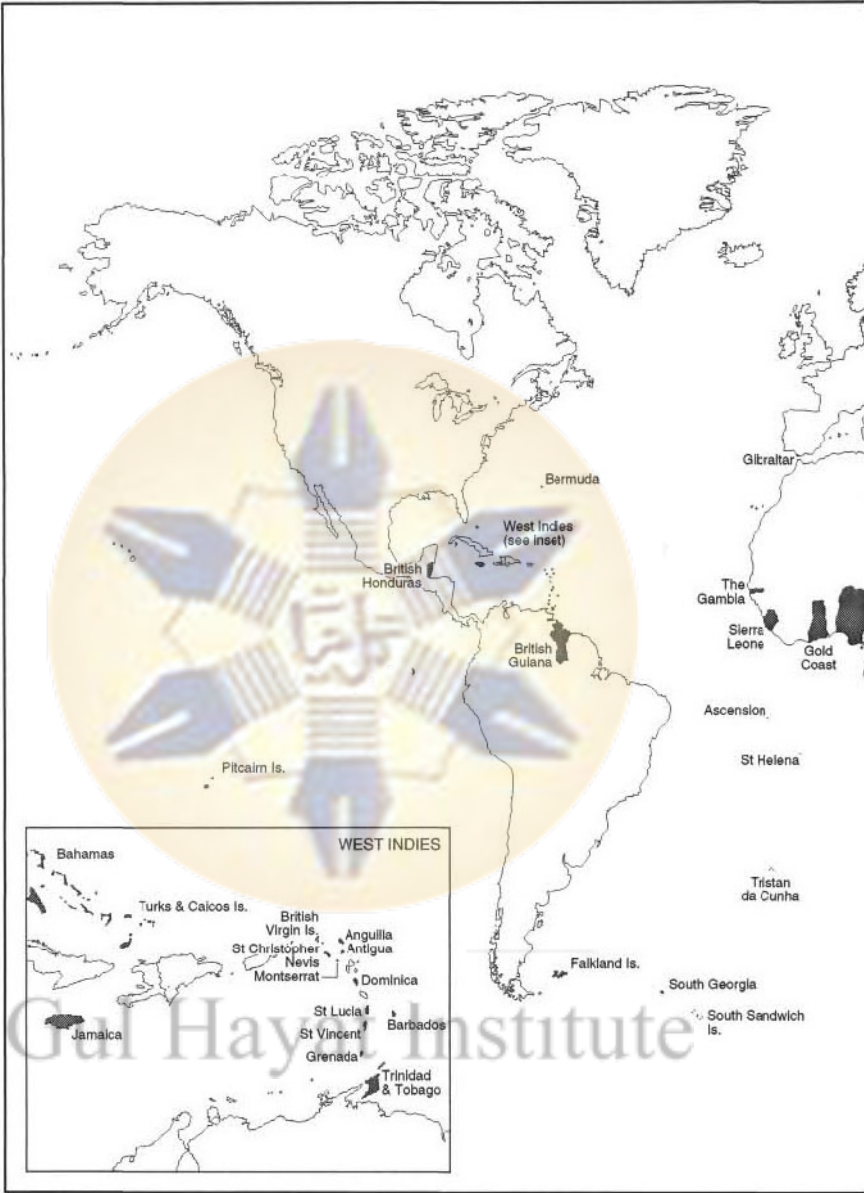
ADC	Aide-de-Camp; Assistant District Commissioner
ADO	Assistant District Officer
AEF	Afrique Equatoriale Française
AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française
BEA	British East Africa
BMA	British Military Administration
BSA	British South Africa Company
BWA	British West Africa
BWI	British West Indies
CA	Crown Agents (for the Colonies); Central Africa
CAC	Corps d'Administrateurs Coloniaux
CAS	Colonial Administrative Service
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CMG	Companion of St Michael and St George
CO	Colonial Office
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
CS	Colonial Service
CSAB	Colonial Service Appointments Board
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CVO	Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
DC	District Commissioner; Deputy Commissioner
DO	District Officer
DSP	District Superintendent of Police
DTC	Department of Technical Co-operation
EICo	East India Company
FCO	Foreign and Colonial Office
FEA	French Equatorial Africa
FO	Foreign Office
FMS	Federal Malay States
FWA	French West Africa
GBE	Knight Grand Cross Order of the British Empire
GCB	Knight Grand Cross of the Bath
GCMG	Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George
GCVO	Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order
GH	Government House
GO	General Order(s)
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HCT	High Commission Territory

HE	His Excellency
HH	His Honour
HMC	Head Masters Conference
HMG	Her (His) Majesty's Government
HMOCS	Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service
IBEACo	Imperial British East Africa Company
ICS	Indian Civil Service
IO	India Office
IOLR	India Office Library and Records
IPS	Indian Political Service
ISC	Imperial Service College
KBE	Knight Commander Order of the British Empire
KCB	Knight Commander of the Bath
KCIE	Knight Commander of the Indian Empire
KCMG	Knight Commander of St Michael and St George
KCSI	Knight Commander of the Star of India
KCVO	Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
KG	Knight of the Order of the Garter
KP	Knight of the Order of St Patrick
KT	Knight of the Order of the Thistle
LSC	Lump Sum Compensation
LVO	Lieutenant Royal Victorian Order
MAS	Malayan Administrative Service
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MVO	Member of the Royal Victorian Order
NA	Native Administration; Native Authority
NR	Northern Rhodesia
OAG	Officer Administering the Government
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OCAP	Oxford Colonial Archives Project
OCRPR	Oxford Colonial Records Project
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
ODRP	Oxford Development Records Project
OETA	Occupied Enemy Territory Administration
PC	Provincial Commissioner; Privy Councillor
PRO	Public Record Office
PS	Private Secretary
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSV	Private Secretary to the Viceroy
PUS	Permanent Under Secretary
RNCo	Royal Niger Company
SAD	Sudan Archive, Durham

SCS	Sudan Civil Service
SDF	Sudan Defence Force
SDO	Senior District Officer
SLA/B	Special List A/B
SoS	Secretary of State
SPS	Sudan Political Service
TAS	Tropical African Service
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
USC	United Services College



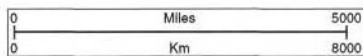
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Britain's dependent



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territories, c. 1939