Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
CONSERVATIVES AND THE EMPIRE 1852-1951

"Those wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years, and they are a mill-stone round our necks."
- Disraeli in 1852

"The normal current of colonial history is the perpetual assertion of the right of self-government."
- Sir C. E. Adderley in Review of the Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration, 1869, p. 3

On 25 October 1951, the Conservative Party returned to power in Britain, with a meagre but workable majority of twenty-six, defeating the Labour Party in a keenly-contested election and bringing the six-year run of the Labour Government to an end. The advent of such a party to office under the leadership of Winston Churchill (who had said only ten years before that he had not become the King's first Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire), however, raised some doubts in some quarters both at home and in the colonial territories, about the new Government's policy. It was, then, widely thought that the Conservative Party being 'the Party of the Empire' was committed to the 'imperial cause' and would not follow down by their predecessor Labour Gov...
resulted in granting independence to India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma. In the West African Press, it was even feared that this should mean "Good Night to Colonial Freedom" and suggested that preparations should be made for large-scale disobedience. The choice of Oliver Lyttelton as the new Secretary of State for the Colonies whose reputation as a tough, indomitable and courageous man, an unrepentant Tory was in direct contrast to that of his predecessors, Arthur Creech Jones and James Griffiths, seemed a straight warning to nationalist leaders in the colonies that toughness would replace conciliation.

In truth, however, while the Conservatives generally felt that political advance in the colonial territories had been pushed on at a fast rate which invited trouble, they could not reverse the clock, as that would have gone against the spirit of the times. And therefore, the Conservative Government's colonial policy could not, in the nature of things, differ markedly from those of the Labour Party. But there were inherent in the Conservative approach very real differences of emphasis and timing, and these were to become significant in the days to come. No proper understanding of the Party's attitude to domestic or imperial issues is possible without some reference to the principles and policy to

1 West African Pilot (Lagos), 27 October 1951.
which the Conservative Party was committed over the years.

The Conservative Principles

The Conservative's claim that "their party is the prisoner of no rigid set of principles" makes them appear as "the most unprincipled of parties". Yet, one finds certain attitudes and principles evolved over the years to which most Conservatives would subscribe. Speaking at the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton, in 1947, Anthony Eden said:

"Conservatism stands for liberty of the individual, his right to liberty, to justice, to respect for his own distinctive personality. It regards the family as the basic social unit, and the sanctity of family life as vital to the health of the State... Conservatism asserts that the duty of government in this country...is to guard and encourage those virtues." But he added: "We are not a Party of unbridled, brutal capitalism, and never have been. Although we believe in personal responsibility and personal initiative in business, we are not the political children of the 'laissez-faire' school. We opposed them decade after decade." The power of politics to put

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4 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
things right, according to the Conservatives, is limited "partly because there are inherent limitations on what may be achieved by political means, but partly because man is an imperfect creature with a streak of evil as well as good in his inmost nature." The aim of politics is the good life, but the Conservatives say, it cannot be comprehended in some phrase or formula and brought about by political means alone. They contend that the most a politician can do is to ensure the existence of some conditions to make the good life possible. They believe that "the public good is attained by the interplay of rival forces, of which they recognise themselves to be but one. The whole basis of modern Conservatism is the rejection of the absolutist claims of the modern Socialist State."

The Conservatives are "frequently content to display an inarticulate, satisfied acceptance of the status quo, a silent respect for tradition or a good humoured realism." 'Toryism', Henley once wrote, 'is as much a matter of taste as a body of doctrine', and Disraeli ended his advice to the editor of a

7 Ibid., p. 16.
new Conservative magazine with a remark which would have dismayed a liberal, 'Above all no programme'. At Edinburgh, in 1946, despite much pressure for 'programme', Winston Churchill defined the Conservative policy as 'Liberty with security; stability combined with progress; the maintenance of religion, the Crown, and the Parliamentary Government' which were all general principles with which no Conservative could quarrel. Conservatism, thus, "is not a cut and dried body of political doctrine, but a code of values and a tradition of thought. It regards religion as the basis of civil society and adheres strongly to the ancient virtues of patriotism and duty. It is marked by a respect for the processes of history, a profound scepticism about easy solutions to difficult problems, and a preference for indulging tolerance, for pursuing... 'middle way' rather than extreme views however logically commended."

"To maintain the institutions of the country; to uphold the Empire; to elevate the condition of the people - the Disraelian principles still hold good."

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9 Ibid., p. 9.
But it is one thing to state the Conservative principles; it is quite another to apply these principles in identical ways to the problems of contemporary politics - both in domestic and foreign affairs. Since the end of the Second World War, it has been the view of the party leadership that the Conservative Party "cannot win a parliamentary majority in the prevailing climate of opinion, except by discarding or disguising its principles." However, such tactical flexibility need not be equated with lack of principles. "Adaptation and continuous revival have been the most notable achievements of the modern Conservative Party."

General Attitude to Empire

The Conservative Party, by long tradition, has been the Empire party and always felt a strong sense of involvement with it. Even as late as October 1951 when the Conservatives went to the polls, it declared as "the Party of the Empire" and said: "We are proud of its past. We see it as the surest hope in our own day. We proclaim our abiding faith in its destiny. We shall strive to promote its unity, its strength, and its progress." The Party's sentimental attachment to

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14 A letter to the editor by F. J. Feuchtwanga, The Times, 4 October 1956.
Empire was largely because the Empire was "in many ways a Conservative institution." It was the Conservatives - Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, Joseph Chamberlain - which had credited the Empire, and therefore, it was natural for them to take pride in preserving it.

The post-war period - 1945-61 - saw little change in the Conservative's thinking on Empire. The Party's annual conferences provide numerous examples in support of this view. "I shall never hang my head in shame" said Ted Leather, Canadian born and unrepentant Imperialist and proud of it, "that my ancestors and yours created the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known." He called upon the delegates of the 1948 Party's annual Conference: "Don't hang your heads in shame, but go on to the housetops with the biggest Union Jack you can find and shout that you are proud of your heritage." Although India - the finest jewel in the British Crown - had gone, the delegates, at the 1947 Party's annual Conference, adopted a resolution reaffirming the party as "the great Imperial Party." For men like Julian Amery,

Bernard Braine, the Conservative Party either was "the Imperial party or it was nothing." Also, the party saw no future for Britain if she stood alone politically or strategically. It was only when the Commonwealth and Empire stood together that she became a great world Power. Even a person like Oliver Stanley who was known for his unorthodox views reaffirmed his belief in the future greatness of British Empire. Although it would not be the same Empire - "the Empire of Kipling or the Diamond Jubilee" - he said, "the new Empire" would certainly have "as great a part to play in the future as ever the British Empire played in the past."

An emphasis on Imperial unity, embracing the colonies and Dominions alike was often stressed. This, the Conservatives thought, could be achieved by retaining the system of Imperial preference. Julian Amery said, no policy of Empire integration could be dynamically pursued, so long they were committed to eliminate Imperial preference and added "Empire preference is the foundation for our whole economic life."
Lord Swinton even called the British Empire "a great economic partnership." Apart from questions of economics, there were foreign policy and defence policy. "All these matters", Anthony Eden said, "had to be thought out in Imperial terms, and not in those of our island nation alone." The future of Britain was, thus, bound with the future of the Empire. The Conservatives maintained that the policy of Empire unity through imperial preference and development was consistent with the policy of the European unity and collaboration with the United States. Even if they had to choose between Europe and the Empire, Oliver Stanley was perfectly certain that the whole of the Conservative Party would say: "We choose the Empire." It was, however, their belief and their hope that such a choice would not have to be made.

Conservatives and the Empire

The middle of the nineteenth century marked the period of 'The Anti-Imperialist Epoch' when "the Colonies inhabited
by White immigrants were no longer prepared to accept direction from Whitehall, at least as far as their internal affairs were concerned." There was a belief that the colonies were nothing but a burden and Disraeli's quotation cited at the head of the Chapter expresses the sentiment of the times when he called the colonies "mill-stone round our necks" and "until the mid-sixties he appeared to accept the Whig-liberal notion that overseas possessions as such were outmoded by the seeming prospect of universal free trade and peaceful international cooperation." A Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1865 to investigate British rule in West Africa recommended strongly against any further extension of responsibility.

But from 1866 onwards, Disraeli himself gave the Conservative Party and the nation a new and dynamic sense of Imperial mission and was quick to perceive new interest in the Empire.


28 This anti-colonial remark of Disraeli has its root in the, then, existing anomaly of self-governing colonies for which there were still imperial responsibilities -- particularly the defence of Canada against United States -- and should not be taken to represent a general aversion to the Empire.


He insisted that "England is no longer a mere European Power; she is the metropolis of the great maritime Empire, extending to the boundaries of the farthest ocean." His famous Crystal Palace speech, in 1872, that "Self-government...but only as part of a great policy of imperial consolidation", and that, "complete separation is not to be thought of"; and that "we must weld ourselves together as one powerful economic and political unity" is often quoted as marking the inauguration of the new imperialist epoch. He went on to adumbrate in a famous passage ideas to which Joseph Chamberlain was to give a more precise articulation thirty years later: 'an imperial tariff', 'a representative council in the metropolis' and 'a military code' of mutual defence, under which not only could the colonies call on the mother country for aid, but vice versa. It was towards the end of Disraeli's period that imperialism became an important element in British Conservatism and his successors in the party leadership were concerned in defending Britain's 'manifest destiny' to be a great colonising and civilizing power.

30 W. David McIntyre, n. 28, p. 24.
31 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 64.
33 R. B. McDowell, n. 8, p. 105.
Disraeli's successor, the third Marquess of Salisbury brought into being the third British Empire, by taking certain political measures, as a direct result of challenging thrusts in Africa and the Pacific by fire of the Continental Powers. He, however, repudiated "the idea that the growth of British Empire was due to an arrogant expansionist urge, and a sheer desire to paint the map red, arguing that territory was being annexed for strictly business reasons." "To keep our trade, our industries alive we must", he explained, "open new sources of consumption in the more untrodden portions of the earth."

Joseph Chamberlain who had left the Liberal Party over the question home rule for Ireland became Colonial Secretary in 1895, in Lord Salisbury's third Government. In his period (1895-1903) as Colonial Secretary, Chamberlain "worked with immense vigour to introduce imperial preference, to consolidate the new territories which had been annexed to the British Crown in the preceding years, to make capital available for opening up these lands, to develop research into tropical medicine and agriculture and to build a strong sense of unity between the component parts of the Empire." He, however,

34 Ibid., p. 106.
35 Ibid., p. 106.
36 Rita Hinden, n. 27, pp. 74-75.
could not persuade the self-governing colonies to enter a Federal Council or Customs Union. In 1903, he, therefore, resigned from the Government to be free to lead his new campaign for tariff reform. This caused dismissals and other resignations and Balfour who succeeded Lord Salisbury in 1902 had to reconstruct his Government.

Thus, the two Conservative Prime Ministers, Disraeli and Salisbury in the latter half of the last century, prided themselves on being the advocates of the great imperialist party. Disraeli's major contribution in this context was his broad conception of an Imperial Britain at the Centre of the family of nations, which explains much of the spirit and political anatomy of the Colonial Empire in the 1950s. He rebelled against the liberal doctrine of his day, with its self-centred concern for the needs of Home industry and the net proceeds of world trade. As he himself put it:

The issue is not a mean one. It is, whether you will be content with a comfortable England modelled and moulded upon Continental principles and meeting in due course an inevitable fate. Or whether you will be a great country -- an Imperial country -- a country where your sons when they rise, rise to paramount positions and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world. 37

Although the Conservative Prime Minister Balfour who succeeded Lord Salisbury was able to effect a reunion, early

in 1905, between his followers and the Chamberlainites, the Government was under heavy pressure which made him resign in December of that year. Later from 1905 to 1915, the Liberals kept the Conservatives out of office. However, in May 1915, Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, gave way to the Conservatives pressure and constructed a new coalition government to contain the Conservative leaders. But it was not until 1922 that the Conservatives were able to form the Government of its own men under Bonar Law. From then onwards till the outbreak of Second World War, the Conservative and Conservative dominated ministries were in office, except for minority Socialist interludes in 1924 and 1929-31. During this period, L. J. Amery (1924 to 1929), Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (now Lord Swinton) (1931-1935) and Ormsby-Gore (now Lord Harlech) (1936-1938) -- all Conservatives -- were responsible for Colonial affairs.

**Between the Wars**

By the early years of the twentieth century, it was quite clear that in view of the growth of colonial nationalism, the relationship between the self-governing colonies and Britain needed definition. The process was speeded up by the co-operation, during the First World War, between Britain and the Dominions which had reached its highest and closest level. Later, at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the Dominions
and India were separately represented which gave them greater international recognition and which culminated in separate foreign offices, diplomatic representation and negotiation of treaties. All these necessitated the change in the old concept of the 'British Empire'. In the 1920s, therefore, there was a double trend towards accepting the complete autonomy of the White Dominions (i.e., the Irish Free State, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa), and also towards varying degrees of devolution of responsibility and delegation of power to the governments of the major components of the Empire (e.g., India, Ceylon, Malaya). The Constitution of the Irish Free State, in 1922, had already described it as 'a co-equal number of the Community of Nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations'. But it was not until 1926 when Balfour, as Chairman of the oddly named Inter-Imperial Relations Committee, framed definition of Dominion Status which was adopted by the Imperial Conference of that year that the foundation was laid for the post-war transformation of the Empire. Later, the Balfour Declaration was given a legal form by the enactment of the Statute of Westminster, in 1931.

Ireland and India were the two imperial problems that caused dissension within the Conservative Party in the 1920s and 1930s. Winston Churchill -- the Chancellor of Exchequer from 1924-1929 -- had some misgivings about the Balfour Declaration of 1926. But all his most deep-rooted instincts, L. S. Amery said, revolted when he found its conclusions embodied in legal form, and realized that they meant the end of all legislative control, not only over the older Dominions, but also over Ireland and, at some future day, even over India. In particular, he concentrated on the possibility that it gave Ireland the legal right to secede from the Commonwealth, a somewhat doubtful point in law, but one which appealed to the strong 'die-hard' element in the Conservative Party which had mustered in strength to cheer him. L. S. Amery was, however, of the view that "no legal safeguards could avert secession if Ireland wished it; that once having conceded Dominion status the only thing was to treat Eire with the same confidence and with the same full acceptance of its independence as we treated the other Dominions."

Churchill's Imperialism was a "combination of romanticism and national self-interest." For him, as Amery wrote,

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41 Ibid., p. 75.
"England is still the starting point and the ultimate object of policy." In his view, the Empire was "a possession that gave to Britain a world position and prestige that she would not otherwise have enjoyed, and whose absolute retention was essential." The concept of Commonwealth as a world entity, which was the goal of an articulate and intelligent school most impressively represented by Amery, Lionel Curtis, Robert Brand and John Buchan, did not attract Churchill.

The question of Indian unrest and Indian constitutional reform had, indeed, exercised the mind of Parliament ever since the change of government of 1929, and had revealed wide divergencies of opinion within the Conservative Party. The Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin (1924-1929), had appointed a Commission under Sir John Simon, in 1927, to recommend further extension of responsible self-government in India. The official attitude of the Conservative critics was at any rate to profess acceptance of the Simon Commission's Report in favour of responsible government in the Provinces. But there were the die-hard Tories who did not share this view and regarded the Round Table Conference, in 1930, "as a

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43 Ibid., p. 199.
44 Ibid.
45 L. S. Amery, n. 40, p. 100.
shameful device for handing over...Indian Empire to Gandhi and a lot of Hindu agitators." And Churchill who had resigned from his place in the Conservative Party's 'shadow cabinet' because of his disagreements with Baldwin over British policy in India, found himself for once lined up with the die-hards. In his Memoirs, L. 3. Amery said: "Pride in Britain's immense achievement in bringing peace, order and good government to India, consciousness of our responsibility for the welfare of the humble masses of India's population, contempt of Indian politicians and distrust of their aims, all combined in him (Churchill) in a fierce resentment against the policy which, with Baldwin's obvious concurrence, the Government were bent on pursuing."

Churchill stood in the forefront of the opposition to the Bill -- which eventually became the Government of India Act, 1935 -- inside and outside Parliament. He employed his fine oratorical gifts in his attempt to keep India under British rule. In London, in 1935, he said: "The loss of India


47 L. S. Amery, n. 40, pp. 97-98.

Amery said: "it was far wiser to meet the demand for self-government half way than to keep the safety valve screwed down, and that sooner or later, the time would come when India could only be kept in the Commonwealth as an equal partner." Ibid., p. 99.
would mark and consummate the downfall of the British Empire. That great organism would pass at a stroke out of life into history. From such a catastrophe there could be no recovery."
The Conservative Party had, however, approved the policy at the beginning of December 1934 and the Bill which provided for all India federation and greater autonomy in the Provinces -- reality of power still with the British Government -- had its Third Reading in the House of Commons in June 1935. The opponents of the Government's policy enjoyed a substantial measure of support in the Party, although not in the Parliamentary Party. Churchill's final speech -- the ending of what Sir Samuel Hoare has described as "Winston's Seven Years' War" -- was darkly gloomy and funeral in tone, and he (Churchill) described the Bill as "a gigantic quilt of jumbled crochet work, a monstrous monument of shame built by pygmies."
Although the Bill got through the House of Commons, its full operation was impeded by the Congress Party under Gandhi and Nehru and the coming of war in 1939, completely changed the situation.

Besides the question of Ireland and India, there were other issues of constitutional development in the colonies

49 Robert Rhodes James, *no. 42*, pp. 208, 212.
for which the Conservatives were responsible between the Wars. As early as 1923, Southern Rhodesia, hitherto a Crown colony, was given the status of a near-Dominion under White leadership. On the West coast of Africa, the policy of local indirect rule was pressed forward, thus broadening and modernizing the local machinery of government in preparation for advances at the centre. In the Gold Coast, the Ashanti federation of chiefs was revived and given official status. In all four West African territories, the representation of the peoples on the legislative councils was extended, as was the elective element on some of the municipal bodies.

The year 1926 saw the establishment of legislative councils in the East African territories of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. These had a number of unofficial and elected members, including representation of African, Indian and Arab interests. In the same year, the East African Governor's Conference was set up. It comprised the Governors of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, and provision was made for the participation of Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Zanzibar. Its object was to secure the co-ordination of development in all these territories.


51 Ibid., p. 25.
The closer political association of the West Indian Colonies had always been very much in the Conservative minds. In 1921-22, the then Under Secretary of State, E. F. L. Wood (later Lord Halifax) had explored during a visit to the West Indies the possibility of extending the elective principle in local government and the practicability of federation. In 1926, the Colonial Secretary, L. J. Amery, recommended the appointment of a standing conference representative of all the West Indian colonies. The Closer Union Mission of 1932 investigated the possibility of confederating adjoining colonies. Unfortunately, none of these attempts succeeded. In spite of a formal failure, however, the whole group was treated more and more as a unit, and informal co-operation went forward in such diverse matters as agriculture, animal husbandry, education and law.

In 1923, the Constitution of Ceylon had undergone modification. The nationalists of that colony were not satisfied by it, and in 1927, after visiting the Island, the Donoughmore Commission proposed a Constitution on the lines of the committee system of the London County Council. A governing body known as the State Council was elected on a wide franchise, its detailed legislative and executive functions being assigned to seven ministers, each assisted by a standing committee of councillors.
This unusual Constitution came into force in 1931 and proved unworkable. Another Commission was subsequently appointed by Oliver Stanley in 1944 to consider fresh reforms.

Under the Conservatives, political consolidation went forward in Malaya and Singapore. Thus, the Conservatives of the 1920s and 1930s consolidated past constitutional advances and initiated new ones throughout the Colonial Empire. They laid excellent foundations for the post-war transformation of the Empire, and in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 they showed unmistakably, five years before the definite Statute of Westminster, that self-government within the British Commonwealth was a living reality. And all peoples of the Empire and Commonwealth were destined in due time to share in it.

The inter-war years was, however, a period of economic frustration and chaos in which laissez-faire was the dominant theme and planning still a suspicious revolutionary doctrine. In the 1920s and 1930s, the conditions within the British Empire were such that "the sins of that time were negative rather than positive -- sins of omission rather than of commission." Nevertheless, there were some notable achievement

55 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 126.
56 Ibid., p. 128.
during this period under the Conservative and the Conservative dominated administration as they believed that without economic stability there could be no social or political progress in the colonies.

Among the most important were the creation of the Empire Marketing Board, in 1926, to promote imperial trade by scientific research and publicity. The Board was dissolved after the Ottawa Conference of 1932, being replaced in 1937 by the Colonial Marketing Board. By 1939 this more specialized board had set on foot inquiries into the possibilities of marketing some fifty additional Colonial products. In March 1932, the Import Duties Act, promoted by Neville Chamberlain, the new Chancellor of Exchequer, imposed emergency duties on most imports, with explicit exemptions for scheduled goods and on all goods from within the Empire until a scheme of preferences could be worked out in consultation with the Dominions. Later, a Conference at Ottawa in August 1932 devised a system of 'Empire Free Trade' which meant tariffs against non-Commonwealth countries and a complex tangle of tariff bargains even within the Commonwealth. But it fell far short of the vision that had inspired Joseph Chamberlain at the beginning of the century and that the Conservatives

57 David Thomson, n. 39, p. 171.
had dreamt of through the years. The Conservatives had long advocated a thorough-going system of Imperial Preference which would ensure a sale for Colonial products within the Empire and Commonwealth and for United Kingdom exports to the colonies. On this very issue, the Conservative Party had been defeated at the polls twice, but certain Dominions, notably Canada, had already given preferential treatment to some colonial producers, e.g., the West Indian banana growers.

But all these were very little to tackle the basic problem of economic development in the colonies. As a result what Joseph Chamberlain had called 'our neglected estates' seemed destined to remain neglected, for all the imagination that was shown regarding their advancement, except in one or two unusual cases where a Governor of vision was able to point the way." The general idea was that "Colonies should be self-supporting; whatever they needed for development or capital equipment should be taken from their own revenues, or else raised through loans on the London money market on which colonial purses would pay a regular -- and often pretty stiff -- rate of interest."

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60 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 130.
61 Ibid., pp. 130-31.
The discontent and increasing unrest in the colonies, in the late 1930s, led to the setting up of Commission after Commission to report on the different aspects of this problem and their reports flooded the Colonial Office in those years. All these reports and documents then suggested that "Britain would herself have to take steps in developing colonial resources and providing for colonial welfare." While this new approach was maturing and public pressure -- both at home and in the colonies -- was forcing the acceptance of what would have amounted to the beginning of a revolution in colonial policy, that war of 1939 broke out.

The War Years (1939-45)

The Second World War drew the colonial people into the thick of hostilities and their Governments were able to bring into force without a hitch the whole array of economic warfare controls covering every property, imports and exports, exchange, prices censorship and so forth. A great deal of fighting took place in the colonial territories -- particularly in Malaya, Hongkong and the territories under British protection in Borneo, which fell into Japanese hands in December 1941, and in the early month of 1942, soon after the

opening of the Japanese campaign and remained in enemy occupation for more than three and half years. This was not only a crushing military defeat and a blow to British prestige, but it also "struck hard and deep at the very roots of British colonial policy." While the official view was that "nowhere in the Colonial Empire was there any sign of lack of solidarity with the aims which had brought Britain into the war", special despatches sent to the British Press from Malaya described "in a vivid and biting terms how the local native populations had not lifted a finger in support of the British administration, and how they had remained impassive and indifferent spectators of the duel between the rival imperialisms of Britain and Japan." Though it is an arguable point, the fact remains that "the fall of Malaya, and the many ensuing criticisms, led to a sharp bout of heart-searching in Britain as to the very basis on which the whole of colonial policy had been built."

One of the important features of the war years was the growth of a swelling sentiment of nationalism which had

64 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 143.
66 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 143.
67 Ibid., p. 145.
important bearing on post-war transformation of the Empire. The colonial people were given to understand that the war was being fought "to uphold the rights of all races against the brutal Fascist idea of Herrenvolk, and against the claims of the German 'master race' to dominate the rest of the world." So, it was quite natural for the colonial people to assert the claims of their own race against any foreign domination and aspire for independence. Also, the speeches directly or indirectly critical of British Imperialism, official pronouncement from time to time and international declarations -- particularly the Atlantic Charter, the Teheran Declaration, the Declaration of Philadelphia -- had important bearing in shaping British colonial policy during the war years.

It was a notable feature of the war years that in spite of the inevitable preoccupation with fighting and with the grim task of winning the war, the ultimate goal of expanding economic development, social progress and increased political responsibility for Colonial peoples was never lost sight of; indeed, even in the darkest days, steady progress towards that goal was continued and plans were laid for its more rapid achievement once victory was assured. Most of war time legislations were based on defense powers vested in the

68 Ibid., p. 141.
69 Cmd. 7167/1948, p. 3.
Colonial Governors and did not interfere with the continued constitutional and political progress for those colonial territories which remained free from enemy occupation.

During the war years, it was found possible for the then Coalition Government under Winston Churchill to pay attention to economic development and to the general improvement of social services. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 designed to expand greatly the scope of the Act of 1929 -- passed at the most critical juncture of the war when the British Army was evacuating Dunkirk, France had fallen and an invasion of England was thought to be imminent -- was the first milestone in the new policy and marked an important stage in the constructive approach by Britain towards her colonies. The Act provided annually a sum of £5 million for welfare and development in the colonies, together with the sum of half a million for research, over a period of ten years from 1941. A Comptroller of Development with a team of advisers was sent out to the West Indies to plan the expenditure of the £1,000,000 allocated annually under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. The good intentions of the Act were limited by the proviso that any money not spent in one year could not be carried over to the next, but had to be returned to the Treasury. As a result, only a fraction of the sums voted by Parliament in 1940 had been spent. Also, the slow progress under the Act because of the shortage of
materials, equipment and manpower throughout the war years induced considerable scepticism among the colonial peoples as to Britain's serious intentions of really doing anything at all. During the last months of the war, the Act of 1940 was, however, supplemented by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1945, which substantially increased the amounts made available annually for financing colonial schemes.

It was not on the economic side alone that progress was made. The tempo was quickened in the constitutional sphere too. A clear statement of policy on constitutional development, made by the then Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, in the House of Commons, in July 1942, stated: "We are pledged to guide the colonial people along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire." It was during the war that specific undertakings were given at different times to Ceylon, Jamaica and Malta, involving a full measure of internal self-government after the termination of hostilities. This included working out a new constitution for Jamaica and its adoption, sending a Commission to enquire into Ceylon's next step towards self-government and promising Malta a return to responsible self-government. In two other West Indian colonies, Trinidad and British Guiana, constitutional reforms were introduced. In the Gold Coast, an African

70 Rita Hinden, n. 27, p. 142.
non-official majority was established in the Legislative Council, and in Northern Rhodesia, in the autumn of 1944, a similar step was taken, these being the first African territories where this was done. Provincial African Councils were also established in Northern Rhodesia. In Nigeria, comprehensive proposals were submitted by the Governor, in December 1944, for the revision of the constitution on lines designed to secure the better representation of African interests, to create a representative central legislative authority for Nigeria and to built up regional authorities in which the diverse elements of that vast country could play their appropriate parts. These proposals, however, were not brought into operation until after the war. In Kenya, too, the first African was given a seat on the Kenya Legislative Council. Thus, the ground was prepared during the war years for more rapid constitutional advances of late 1940s and 1950s.

The Conservative Party in Opposition (1945-51)

After their defeat in the 1945 General Election at the hands of Labour, the Conservative Party faced a period of opposition comparable only with the years after 1906. But they behaved most sensibly. Yet, in spite of their more favourable position after 1945, it took two elections to bring

the Conservatives back to power. Most of the ground was regained at the first election -- held in February 1950. During their period of Opposition, the Conservative Party undoubtedly "made a major effort to re-think its political programme, reorganise its internal constitution, and recover its parliamentary morale." Soon after the results of 1945 election, there was an immediate demand, by many Conservatives, especially those most critical of its policy, of a 'reformulation' of Conservative principles and policy. As a result, in May 1947, The Industrial Charter was published. This was followed by a series of further policy statements -- The Agricultural Charter, Imperial Policy etc. -- within the next year and half, culminating in the Party's election programme for 1950 and 1951. The success of the process of policy reformulation is considered a major achievement of the Conservative Party during its years of Opposition.

The 1947 Brighton Conference had called on the Conservatives to reaffirm themselves as "the great Imperial Party" and demanded a statement of Imperial Policy. Speaking on the motion, Oliver Stanley said: "When the party came to produce an Imperial Charter, they should bear in mind that the main

72 Robert Blake, n. 32, p. 257.
73 J. D. Hoffman, n. 10, p. 133.
object was not the laying down of a detailed policy which they would seek to impose on the Empire. They should reaffirm their conviction that by their own faith and enthusiasm they would be able to carry others willingly along the road they desired to take." The 1948 Party Conference which had demonstrated Conservative's commitment to Imperial cause and reaffirmed its earlier expressed request, was assured by Oliver Stanley that the work on the policy statement was far advanced. The long awaited statement -- Imperial Policy -- was finally published on 24 June 1949.

The statement which was the work of a Committee under Lord Tweedsmuir -- its other members were Lennox-Boyd, Gammans, Brigadier Low and Dodds-Parker -- was the longest of the policy statements then produced. Churchill had watched closely the drafting of the text which Oliver Stanley had guided and R. A. Butler edited. And yet, "considering the amount of time spent on it, there was nothing very original in it." The old notion of an 'Empire economic partnership'


77 J. D. Hoffman, n. 10, p. 182.
was put forward once again by a vague suggestions for 'adequate machinery for economic consultation' and 'a system of Imperial Priorities for the investment of money, capital goods and trade'. System of Imperial preference was to be preserved. There was a suggestion for a Commonwealth Tribunal to which disputes between Commonwealth members could be referred, a Commonwealth combined staff for defence, and complete standardization of equipment, organization, and training throughout the entire field of Imperial Defence.

The statement earlier reviewed the world situation and the threat to democratic freedom represented by Soviet aggression. It declared that moral leadership of the "cold war" against the new barbarism must devolve largely upon the British Commonwealth. Thus, while affirming its faith in the ideals of the United Nations and in the importance of developing regional agreements, including the project for Western Union, the party, it said, would not allow any such agreement to override or conflict with the political, economic or defence obligations falling on Great Britain as a member of the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations.

The object of Conservative colonial policy, it declared,

79 Ibid., p. 8.
was "to guide Colonial peoples along the road to self-government" but "within the framework of the British Empire." The objective was to be achieved "as soon as Colonial peoples are ready for it", but this would be dependent on two conditions that the country was economically sound, with efficient social services, and that the power could be transferred to the people as a whole and not to a small and unrepresentative political, racial, or religious oligarchy. It was pointed out that there were certain Colonies whose retention within the Empire was essential to the security of the Commonwealth, and it was for that reason that the emphasis was laid on self-government within the Empire. The policy envisaged a virtual revolution in the then approach to colonial education and to developments in methods of agriculture. A steady transition of individual land tenure was contemplated combined with the encouragement of co-operative credit societies, land banks and co-operative produce marketing.

With the acceptance of this policy statement at the 1949 Party Conference unanimously, the Conservative Party showed a clear acceptance of the constitutional development of the post-war Commonwealth as it was taking shape under the Labour Government. Also, with this publication the Conservative process of policy reformulation was completed. It

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80 Ibid., p. 55.
was with these objectives which were later incorporated in a 
32-page pamphlet Britain Strong and Free that the Conserva-
tives went to the polls, at the 1951 General Election in 
Britain.

The Conservative Party which returned to power in 1951, 
in Britain, under Winston Churchill, was, thus, committed to 
a programme which was based on the broad objectives of the 
Conservative colonial policy stated in June 1949. This was 
made clear by the newly-appointed Conservative Colonial 
Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, in his first statement in the 
House of Commons, on 14 November 1951, when he said:

Certain broad lines of policy are accepted by 
all sections of the House as being above party 
politics. These have been clearly stated by my 
predecessors from both the main parties.

Two of them are fundamental. First, we shall 
aim at helping the Colonial Territories to attain 
self-government within the British Commonwealth. 
To that end we are seeking as rapidly as possible 
to build up in each territory the institutions 
which its circumstances require. Second, we are 
all determined to pursue the economic and social 
development of the Colonial Territories so that it 
keeps pace with their political development.

His Majesty's Government intend no change in 
these aims. 82

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81 Lyttelton was a member of Churchill's War Cabinet and 
was successively President of the Board of Trade, 
Minister in the Middle East and Minister of Production.

82 U.K., House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 5th 
Lyttelton's statement on colonial policy was almost 

(footnote contd....)
In reply to supplementary question from his Labour predecessor, James Griffiths, he confirmed his acceptance of the principle of equal consideration for "all colours and creeds" in multi-racial communities. But it was here, it seems, the Conservatives did not follow the principles so faithfully.

The difference between the Conservatives and the Labourites at this time was that the Conservatives, in the main, still believed in a policy of 'gradualism', advocating a slow, step-by-step transfer of power. In his Memoirs Lord Chandos (formerly Lyttelton) wrote: "The dominant theme of colonial policy had to be the careful and if possible gradual and orderly progress of the colonies towards self-government within the Commonwealth" and that it was "clearly the only practical course and still is." For, he said, first, Britain did not have then the force to govern without the consent of the governed; secondly, with modern communications which made possible to carry the flame of the nationalist aspirations of

(previous footnote contd.)

identical with that of his Labour predecessor, Arthur Creech Jones when the latter said: "The central purpose of British colonial policy is simple. It is to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the people concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter."


one territory and set alight the same flame in another, that consent had to be engaged by open and candid discussion of policy. It, therefore, seemed clear to him that the development of self-government, though at different rates and with different methods, was at once the only enlightened and the only practical theme of a colonial policy in the 1950s. Gradualism also had some support from the Labour Party leaders when they were in power. The Conservatives, therefore, always opposed the idea of a time table, since fixing a firm date for independence was hostile to the concept of gradualism.

Thus, when the Conservatives took over in 1951, everywhere in the colonies, the aims had become clearer than they

84 Ibid., pp. 352-3.
85 Henry Hopkinson, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, said: "Any such proposal for fixing a rigid time table had always seemed fraught with danger. No one could be certain, long in advance, that when the fixed date arrived there would be in the territory an established and stable system of democratic government."

The Times, 30 August 1954.

Lord Boyd told me: "If a Minister with a large responsibilities in territories like these bound himself in an advance to a particular date whereby a responsible or a final self-government was going to be guaranteed, but if a situation changed in the interval, he would then be obliged in honour to carry out the promises he had made, even though it would be very unwise in the interest of the territories to do so. So, I was always opposed to fix time tables. Occasionally, it became unavoidable (footnote contd....)
were during the confused period when the Labour Government took office, just after the war. Although India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon had gone, Empire in Africa, the West Indies, the Mediterranean and South-East Asia was still in tact; Britain was still the leading Power in the Middle East. But in Malaya, the situation was serious because of the Communist terrorists movement; the West Indies were discontented and the African continent was restless to have power to run their own affairs. Already, the Gold Coast was enjoying a degree of self-rule and in British Guiana and in a number of other colonial territories, a start had been made for self-government. But repeated statement of policy had made it clear that the Conservatives, too, aimed to lead the colonies towards self-government within the British Commonwealth and had no intention

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and I had to agree but it was always reluctantly.

Interview with Lord Boyd (formerly Lennox Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies) in London on 26 March 1970.

86 The British Empire then included: Aden, Bahama Islands, Barbados, Bermuda, British Guiana, British Honduras, Brunei, Cyprus, Falkland Islands and Dependencies, Fiji, Gambia, Gibraltar, Gold Coast, Hongkong, Jamaica, Kenya, Leeward Islands, Federation of Malaya, Malta, Mauritius, Nigeria, North Borneo, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, St. Helena, Sarawek, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somaliland, Tanganyika, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Western Pacific, Windward Islands, Zanzibar - in all thirty seven territories.
to "put the clock back." Even before making a statement in the Parliament, Lyttelton, at his first press conference, declared that the Conservative Government had no intention of going back on constitutional changes already made in the colonies, or of retarding progress and claimed to be very progressive in the matter of constitutional changes. He said: "We will not be committed with regard to what is pending or under consideration, but what is already done or promised will be carried through." While self-government within the Empire would continue to be the basic policy, he emphasized that economic development must keep pace with the political.

Against this background, an attempt is made in the following pages to assess to what extent the Conservative Party, while in office from 1951 to 1957, did fulfil its promise of not reversing the clock, in applying its colonial policy and implementing its programme and principles; and to discover the difference in emphasis and timing between the

87 Daily Telegraph (London), 8 November 1951, First Press Conference of Lyttelton.

88 East Africa and Rhodesia (London) vol. 23, no. 1414, 15 November 1951.

On his appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lyttelton sent the following message to the territories with which the Colonial Office was associated: "I enter upon this great office with full realisation of the vital importance of its work both to the peoples of the territories associated with it and

(footnote contd....)
Conservatives and the Labour's colonial policy during the year 1951-57. It also shows whether their policy differed from time to time and territory to territory, particularly those territories which had sizeable presence of White settlers and those free from them.

The year 1951 was important in that there was a change of Government in Britain. And 1957 was equally important as Gold Coast and Malaya became independent in that year. The study is, however, a selective one; it deals with the Conservative Government's colonial policy regarding two aspects: the growth of self-government in selected colonies, and economic development of colonial territories to keep pace with their political development. Only some of the important colonial issues of the day have been considered, owing to the limitations of time and space. And I am conscious of the importance and relevance of what has been left out.

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to the British Commonwealth and democratic world. I know how numerous, varied and complex are the questions to be answered in those territories, but I also know with what energy, capacity and high sense of purpose all concerned with them are striving to find the answers. I am glad, and honoured, to have the opportunity to play my part, together with the peoples of the territories for which I now have responsibility, and with the Colonial Service, in the common effort upon which you are all engaged." Notes on Current Politics (Conservative Research Department, London), no. 1, 21 January 1952, p. 35.