

# **The Early Contributions of British Nationals to the Post-War International Organisations**

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## Introduction

Our collaboration on the book: *Eric Drummond and his Legacies-the League of Nations and the Beginnings of Global Governance* (London 2019) authored jointly with David MacFadyen and Marilyn Carr prompted us to work together on a short description on the British contribution to the establishment of the United Nations System. There is a similarity between the book on Drummond and this monograph in that both record British contributions to multilateralism whether following the First World War or during or following the Second.

But there is also a larger motive. We are writing at a time when the English nation within the United Kingdom has been turning its back on the benefits and importance of institutionalised multilateral cooperation. It thus struck us as worthwhile to see why and how an earlier generation believed in the merits of international cooperation and how those women and men sought to build a better world. By focussing on the people involved we also wanted to record and promote recognition for what they achieved. In telling their story we hope it may also help to keep alive in Great Britain the spirit of internationalism that is ever more necessary for present generations to confront the huge and complex problems of today's world.

We have divided the paper into three broad sections. Part I looks at how the UK government contributed to the creation of the United Nations, with particular reference to the work of key officials in the Foreign Office (FO) during this period. Part II describes how UK nationals were early recruits to the UN and to the newly created specialised agencies and (broadly) covers the period up to the end of the 1960s. It focusses on the work of UK staff members; we are of course conscious of the significant contributions to the work of the UN and agencies made by British consultants and British members of UN expert groups and the like but their contributions are beyond the scope of the present study. Part III carries on from Part II and offers some general remarks about UK staffing of the UN and the agencies in the 1960's and 1970's.

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## Part I: The Creation of the United Nations and its Agencies

A collective effort led by the United States (US) with the active involvement and support of the United Kingdom and other countries established the United Nations (UN) and its new international agencies. The UK's contribution was the result of deliberate government policies in favour of multilateral cooperation and was steered by a handful of key officials in the FO (Foreign Office). The nature of that involvement and the work of those officials, which are the subjects of Part I, may be summarised by the following two extracts from an internal FO memorandum of July 1945:

‘our policy has been, and presumably still is, not to emphasize our achievements in public, but rather to allow the Americans to claim the principal credit for the charter as a whole ... It is also true, I think, that many Americans really believe that most of the important features of the Charter originated in the United States.’<sup>1</sup>

The first steps were taken in mid-1941 when the war was going very badly for Britain and the Dominions (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa) which at that stage were fighting alone. The US had yet to join the war and the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union (USSR) had yet to occur. The Germans were advancing in North Africa and towards the Middle East, while Japan was advancing in Asia.

Thus, planning for the post-war international order began well before victory was assured. The military and the population at large needed a sense of purpose for the sacrifices they were being asked to make and the horrors of war brought home to them the need to ensure that these terrible events must never be repeated. Recognition of the difficulties in framing, devising, designing or creating international institutions for a peaceful and productive world free of conflict and animosity meant that this was too important to be left until victory was at hand.

Part 1, Section A summarizes the dates, purposes and outcomes of the series of meetings that established the new general international organisation. In Section B, we recall those British officials who conceived and brought to life the UN. In Section C, we present the work of the UN Preparatory Commission that took place in London in late 1945. And in Section D, we briefly recall the UK contribution to two war-time *ad hoc* bodies, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and the UN War Crimes Commission (UNWCC).

### A. Dates and events

In all of the stages and in relationship to the US, the UK played a very strong supporting secondary role, if not on occasion the leading role, in establishing the UN.

#### 1941

**12 June - Declaration of St. James Palace, London.** In resolving to continue the struggle against aggression, representatives of the UK, the four Dominions, and nine occupied European countries agreed that:

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<sup>1</sup> Rohan Butler and Margaret Pelley (eds). *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series I Vol. I, 1945 Gladwyn Jebb, ‘Reflections on San Francisco’, 25 July 1945 U5998/12/70, (London 1984). Jebb also went on to state that: “I understand they have practiced the same kind of self-deception in regard to R.A.D.A.R., the secret of which was furnished to them by us.”

‘the only true basis of enduring peace is the willing cooperation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security; It is our intention to work together, and with other free peoples, both in war and peace, to this end’.

**14 August - The Atlantic Charter** in which President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill declared a set of ‘common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world’ that became in effect the first general statement of the aims of the allies.

## 1942

**1 January – Declaration by the United Nations** negotiated by Roosevelt and Churchill in which the US, UK, USSR, China and 22 other states ‘having subscribed ... to the Atlantic Charter, pledged their full cooperation with the other signatory powers in the defeat of the enemy.’ This was the first use of the expression United Nations, although then meaning the full war-time alliance.

**November** – The FO produced its first plans for a new international organisation: **the Four Power Plan**.

## 1943

**January and July** – The FO updated its proposals in firstly **The UN Plan** and subsequently in **The UN Plan for Organising Peace and Welfare**.

**17-24 August - Quebec Conference** (Roosevelt and Churchill)

**18 October – 11 November - meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow** (Molotov - USSR, Hull - USA, Eden - UK)

**28 November – 1 December Tehran Summit** of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill which resulted in the recognition of:

‘the necessity of establishing at the earliest practical date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security’.

Following the Tehran summit, the British and the American governments intensified preparations for subsequent discussions between the three great powers on functions, responsibilities and structures of the proposed ‘general international organization’.

**On 29 December**, the US State Department submitted to President Roosevelt a ‘Plan for the establishment of an international organization for the maintenance of international peace and security’, that was subject to several modifications over the ensuing seven months.

## 1944

In **April**, the FO prepared five memoranda on a world organization that the Cabinet approved in May as the basic position of the British Government, and on **18 July**, the US presented its **Tentative Proposals for a General International Organisation**.

The latter two documents, and a less comprehensive set of proposals from the USSR (and separately China) provided the basis for the **Dumbarton Oaks Conversations: 22**

**August – 28 September** between the US, UK and USSR and **29 September – 9 October** between US, UK and China<sup>2</sup>. These conversations at the level of government officials resulted in broad agreement on the nature of a ‘general international organisation’, on the understanding that those issues on which agreement was not possible<sup>3</sup> would be further discussed by heads of government.

## 1945

The outstanding issues were discussed at the **4-9 February Yalta Conference** in Crimea, between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, on the basis of which the US agreed that it would convene an international conference to discuss the establishment of a world organisation.

On **25 April** the **United Nations Conference on International Organization** opened in **San Francisco, USA**, to discuss and agree on the draft Charter of the UN. On **26 June**, 50 countries signed the Charter, which was ratified on **24 October**<sup>4</sup>. The San Francisco Conference established the **Preparatory Commission of the United Nations** charged with responsibility for:

‘making provisional arrangements for the first sessions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council, the establishment of the secretariat, and the convening of the International Court of Justice.’

The Preparatory Commission, and its Executive Committee, met in London from **September to December**.

## 1946

The **first meeting of the General Assembly (GA)** took place on **10 January**, in Central Hall, Westminster, London with the **Security Council (SC)** and the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** following, on **17 and 23 January** respectively, in Church House, Westminster.

### **B. Cadogan, Jebb and Webster: the Foreign Office triumvirate**

Winston Churchill was fully conscious of the need for an organization similar to but more effective than the League of Nations, but he was neither consistent nor focused on the issues involved in creating a new international organization. He was certainly Roosevelt’s equal in finding the right language for international declarations and he successfully defended the interests of the UK when threatened by US or Soviet demands. However, he blew hot and cold, arguing sometimes for the construction of an international organization based on regional pillars while at other times, ignoring the significance of important questions. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, in contrast, having had first-hand experience of the failures of the League to preserve peace and security, was consistent in his views on the need for an effective international organization. He was also very supportive of his officials in their efforts to bring about an organization that was in Britain’s interests.

Who were these FO officials who worked mostly unseen to the public? Sir Alexander Cadogan, Gladwyn Jebb and Charles Webster were the principals, each of whom played a distinctive role

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<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union did not recognize the Government of Chiang Kai-Shek and thus the Consultations had to be held in two distinct but sequential phases.

<sup>3</sup> Namely the application of the veto and the criteria for membership.

<sup>4</sup> Poland was not officially represented in San Francisco, but ratified the Charter on 15 October, thereby making 51 original members of the United Nations.

in the processes summarized in Section A. They were the only British officials who participated in all of the Conferences at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco and in the Preparatory Commission. Cadogan and Jebb were also present at Tehran and Yalta. Over a period of three years they worked together not always in full agreement with each other but always dedicated to the cause of an international organization that was both necessary and effective yet at the same time they were highly aware of the demand for an organization that was consistent with and sensitive to British security needs. They were also - and this is perhaps less widely known - fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the League; Cadogan from first-hand experience over many years, Webster because of his academic studies and knowledge and Jebb from visits to Geneva in the 1930's.

**Alex Cadogan (1884-1968)** was the youngest child of an old Anglo-Welsh family of high social standing and wealth. His father served in Disraeli's and Salisbury's cabinets and was Viceroy of Ireland in the late 1890's. After being educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, Cadogan joined the FO and was posted first to Constantinople<sup>5</sup> and then Vienna where he was in charge of the Embassy when news reached him of the shooting at Sarajevo. He continued to serve in the FO during the First World War, and was present at the Peace Conference in 1919. Eyre Crowe, the then Permanent Under-Secretary 'described him as 'the best man in the Office' when appointing him in 1923 as head of the League of Nations Section. David Dilks, who edited Cadogan's diaries,<sup>6</sup> quotes from Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain's letter of 1926 to Cadogan 'I take occasion to say again how admirably your League work is done', before commenting that Cadogan 'came from experience to believe in the value and promise of Geneva, for most delegates went there with a genuine desire to do business and reach solutions'. In 1933, it had been suggested that Cadogan might become Secretary General (SG) of the League in succession to Eric Drummond. Nothing came of this and he was posted to Peking as British Minister in charge of the Legation, before returning to London in 1936 as joint Deputy Under-Secretary at the explicit request of the new Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. In 1938, when the Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Robert Vansittart retired, Cadogan acceded to the post eventually becoming the longest-ever serving head of the FO. In 1944 Eden appointed him to be the British representative at the Dumbarton Oaks Conversations. It is somewhat ironical that Cadogan advised against the appointment of a permanent British representative in Geneva because as he later served as the first UK representative to the UN from 1945-1950, the post from which he retired from the diplomatic service.

**Gladwyn Jebb (1900-1996)** was born into a Yorkshire family. After Eton and Magdalen College, Oxford, he joined the FO, serving first in Tehran and later in Rome where his posting coincided with the newly appointed British Ambassador to Italy, Eric Drummond, first SG of the League of Nations. Between these two postings he had been Private Secretary to the new Labour Minister Hugh Dalton, an experience which was repeated when Jebb was appointed to the Special Operations Executive with Dalton as his Minister in the early wartime coalition government under Churchill. This did not work out for various reasons and Jebb was relieved of his functions. But back in the FO, Jebb was appointed by Cadogan as head of the Economic and Reconstruction Department. It had been anticipated that this would be a backwater, but Jebb successfully converted the position into a centre for long-term post-war planning such as developing British plans for the UN and he remained at the centre of British foreign policy for much of the 1940's and 1950's. Following the Conference in San Francisco in 1945 Jebb was appointed Executive Secretary charged with organising the work of the Preparatory Commission. On ratification of the Charter, he was appointed Acting Secretary-General of the UN..

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<sup>5</sup> Then the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>6</sup> David Dilks, (Ed.) *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*, Introduction, p4. (New York, 1972).

Jebb succeeded Cadogan as the British Permanent Representative to the UN in New York from 1950-1954. His final posting was as British Ambassador to France from 1954-1960. On retirement he was created a hereditary peer as Baron Gladwyn. Following in Drummond's footsteps, he too served as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, where he strongly supported Britain's entry into the, then, European Common Market and was a member of the European Parliament in the mid-1970's.

Jebb was a difficult character; he was clearly brilliant, 'an intellectual of deep culture with a powerful brain'<sup>7</sup>. But he was sometimes over-bearing, a bully on occasion and showed a tactlessness that some ascribed to being too honest. When asked why he had joined the Liberal Party, he replied 'they are an army without a general; I am a general without an army'. However, Jebb always maintained that he acted in what he considered the best interests of his country.

**Charles Webster (1886-1961)** read History at Kings College, Cambridge. Much of his career was as a professional historian and academic. As the Stevenson Professor of International History at the London School of Economics (LSE) for over 20 years, he was known for his studies on the Congress of Vienna, the League of Nations, the foreign policies of Castlereagh and Palmerston, and the art and practice of diplomacy. Furthermore he was an expert on the Covenant of the League. In the war years, he worked in the FO where he actively supported the establishment of the UN. Jebb in his Memoirs, describes Webster as 'in manner rather aggressive, but human and kindly underneath ...very much a don of pre-First World War vintage .... He quickly established himself as a pundit in the Economic and Reconstruction Department'. Webster was knighted in 1946 in recognition of the work he had accomplished in the FO.

This was a formidable triumvirate of knowledge, experience and intellectual capacity. All three were 'great power' men, that is to say that they believed that international peace and security could only be achieved and maintained through agreement and alliance among the most powerful countries and that an international organisation that secured such agreement would be in Britain's best interests. It was this conviction that underpinned the British proposals for a new world organisation, in contrast to that of Arnold Toynbee, the director of the FO Research Department from 1943-1946, who advocated world government.

Jebb began working on these issues in the late summer of 1942 and by October had produced a revised version of his first set of proposals in a paper entitled 'Four Power Plan' similar to Roosevelt's notion of the four policemen (US, UK, USSR and China). The paper, which provided the basis around which all subsequent UK proposals were framed, was based on the Atlantic Charter's principles. Cabinet discussion followed, on the basis of Eden's summary of Jebb's paper. This prompted Stafford Cripps, who by then was a member of the War Cabinet, to offer his own version at variance with elements of Jebb's proposals. Jebb dealt with the problem by winning over a "youngish Welsh socialist called David Owen [who] was the only man ...who could possibly bring Sir Stafford back on the rails'. Owen, who had been seconded from the FO to be Cripps' private secretary, went on to be an adviser to the British delegation at San Francisco. Shortly afterwards, he joined the United Nations Preparatory Commission as Jebb's deputy – the beginnings of a highly distinguished UN career (see Text Box below).

In July 1943, the War Cabinet received the first full set of FO suggestions on post-war plans, entitled 'The United Nations Plan for Organising Peace [and Welfare]<sup>8</sup>'. The paper was drafted

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<sup>7</sup> His son-in-law, the historian Hugh Thomas, in the Introduction to Sean Greenwood, *Titan at the Foreign Office – Gladwyn Jebb and the Shaping of the Modern World*, (Leiden, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> These two words were omitted in the version submitted to the War Cabinet.



by Jebb with the help of Webster – who in particular contributed the notion of a great power council that would sit not periodically but almost continuously. It also provided the intellectual background for the British government to accept the American proposal for the ‘Big Three’ to announce at Tehran that they had agreed to establish ‘at the earliest practical date, a general international organisation for the maintenance of international peace and security’.

In February 1944, the FO submitted to the US its proposals for such an organisation, in the form of headings or a draft agenda for subsequent discussion. The US and UK views were beginning to converge. The two governments agreed that discussions should take place at the official level and Eden decided that Cadogan would be the British representative. The USSR was kept fully informed of matters. Then in April, Jebb and Webster produced the five British memoranda on a world organisation. They were very detailed and could be viewed as the British draft of a possible international treaty or charter. Memorandum A covered ‘The scope and nature of the permanent organisation’, Memorandum B deal with the ‘Pacific Settlement of Disputes’, C covered ‘The Military aspect of any post-war security organisation’, D focussed on the ‘Co-ordination of political and economic international machinery’ whilst E set out British proposals for the ‘Method and procedure for establishing a world organisation’. Webster’s views of the Covenant and of what should be preserved from the League are evident throughout the documents.

Churchill did not like elements of the proposals and Cadogan intervened on several occasions to settle misunderstandings and to clarify and simplify several of Jebb’s ideas. Churchill postponed discussions in the War Cabinet hoping to benefit from a previously planned meeting of the Dominion prime ministers in early May 1944. In fact, the Dominions on the whole preferred the approach of the five Memoranda rather than Churchill’s notion of a World Peace Council, three regional councils and a ‘United States of Europe’. Possibly this was the result of Cadogan’s interventions; somewhat sardonically perhaps, he recorded in his diaries for 15 May 1944 that he ‘finally got [his] box and straightened out [the] World Organisation’<sup>9</sup>!

The five Memoranda were slightly redrafted to save Churchill’s face, and made available to the Dumbarton Oaks Consultations that were launched in mid-August. Here they complemented US proposals for a general international organisation that formed the basis of the negotiations. The Soviets, and later the Chinese, also submitted significantly fewer comprehensive proposals. In large part, the various proposals were complementary and much of the Consultations went relatively smoothly. The most difficult problem, however, that of the application of the veto (see below), was largely settled at Yalta and finally resolved at San Francisco. Cadogan was hugely influential during the Conversations. Dilks commented as follows: ‘Cadogan’s performance at Dumbarton Oaks won him golden opinions in the US and laid the foundation for his work as the first permanent head of the British delegation at the UN. He showed himself clear in argument, quick to grasp the points, precise in language; with all his detailed knowledge of the League’s procedures, strengths and failings, a knowledge which no other delegate at the Conference began to rival, he spoke with exceptional authority. Edward Stettinius, US Secretary of State, called Cadogan “one of the strong men of Dumbarton Oaks”’<sup>10</sup>.

The outcome of Dumbarton Oaks formed the basis for the San Francisco Conference that was to agree upon and adopt the Charter of the United Nations. Again, the Americans were profoundly appreciative of Cadogan’s work during the Conference, Stettinius writing to Cadogan when he returned to London in early June 1945: ‘your contribution to our work here has been

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<sup>9</sup> David Dilks, *Ibid.* p629.

<sup>10</sup> David Dilks, *Ibid.* p669.

invaluable. No-one appreciates more than I do the extent to which you have been able to find the right answer to reconcile conflicting points of view<sup>11</sup>.

Most of what Jebb and Webster had planned for found its way into the Charter. The main British interests – and/or those where the UK made what can be considered a significant and specific contribution to the process – can be summarised under four headings: peace and security, regionalism, colonialism and functional cooperation.

*Peace and security.* Because of direct British experience of the League, Cadogan, Jebb and Webster were listened to with respect at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco. The British were adamant on the need to maintain great power unanimity for any international organisation to survive and thrive. Britain also insisted on the need for both middle-power representation and geographical distribution in the SC as necessary measures to ensure its legitimacy. Again because of the League's experience, the British proposed that the UN SG should have the right to bring, on his own initiative, any 'situation or dispute he thought likely to endanger peace and security'. Interestingly, the Americans proposed that he should also have the right to bring to the Assembly 'questions that might impair general welfare'<sup>12</sup>. The former found its way into the Charter as Article 99 and has proved its worth in subsequent UN practice. The latter did not, but has now also become common practice. The British, largely through Jebb, were additionally responsible for proposing a Military Staff Committee to assist the SC. Based on the inter-allied war-time experience of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Committee was set up in London in early February 1946 whilst Jebb was still involved, but soon fell into disuse as a result of the Cold War and US-USSR tensions.

The manner in which the issue of the application of the veto came to be settled is historically unclear; successful compromises often have several fathers. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that the British proposals, more than the American ones, found the way forward that Stalin was able to accept<sup>13</sup>. In brief, the Soviet paper prepared for Dumbarton Oaks proposed that a permanent member would have the right to veto action in those cases where it was a party to the dispute. The UK and American position had been based up and until that moment on the perhaps naïve assumption of continuing great power unanimity. The solution, initially proposed informally at Dumbarton Oaks, developed subsequently in London and agreed at Yalta, was an apparent British compromise whereby a permanent member would not be able to veto discussion of a dispute. It would however be entitled to veto – if and when the SC reached that stage – the enforcement action itself. This compromise was designed to ensure in part the USSR's agreement and in part the continued adherence of the middle and smaller powers without whom there would be no international organisation.

However, it is not clear who, within the British triumvirate, was responsible for this compromise. Jebb claimed the credit and his biographer provides some evidence in support. The official history of British foreign policy on this point<sup>14</sup> recalls the Cadogan memorandum of November 1944 that set out the basis of the Yalta compromise. Webster's diaries provide evidence that it was Jebb that provided the first drafts of the Cadogan memorandum. But Dilks, says 'Cadogan judged that the new organisation would not attract the full support of all states if a single power could frustrate its purposes by use of the veto. He still thought that his rejected Dumbarton

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<sup>11</sup> David Dilks, *Ibid.* p750.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth B. Russell, assisted by Jeanette E. Muther, *A History of the United Nations Charter – The Role of the United States 1940-1945*, (Washington D.C. 1958), p398.

<sup>13</sup> Generally understood to be in exchange for US and UK concessions over Poland, other Eastern European issues and the UN admission of two (but not fifteen as Stalin initially demanded) of the Soviet Republics.

<sup>14</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, (London, 1962), p460.

Oaks' compromise – essentially that permanent members should not possess a veto in the earlier stages of a dispute – would be the best solution. Meanwhile Churchill had inclined to the Russian view. It is characteristic of Cadogan that the diary does not indicate the nature of his compromise, which, when adopted by Roosevelt, became the agreed solution’.

In the light of Jebb's comment quoted at the beginning of Part I, Webster's contribution to the drafting of the Preamble to the Charter should also be recorded. Webster had prepared an early first draft in December 1944. In San Francisco he merged his draft with a longer one prepared by General Smuts of South Africa. It was this draft that was submitted to the drafting committee. When further embellished with the now well-known phraseology ‘we the people of the United Nations’ from US delegate and literary professor Virginia Gildersleeve, the Webster draft provided much of the language for the Preamble. Webster's diary entry for 25 June 1945 (the date the Charter was signed) is certainly unashamed: the Charter's ‘new ideas come mainly from me, if I may so record without undue egoism. The Purpose and Principles, the promise to settle all disputes, the acceptance of primary responsibility by the S[ecurity] C[ouncil], the promise of other states to obey it – all come from my original paper [written in the Foreign Office]. Some of the phraseology has come right through’.

Webster continues with the following: ‘that I have been able to contribute [to the drafting of the Charter] has been largely due to Gladwyn Jebb. It was he who brought me into the centre of the machine. He is not aware how much his own ideas have changed under my influence. He was quite ignorant of the subject when he became head of the Reconstruction Dept. He had all the ideas of his generation and distrusted and disliked the League. Of course both Eden and Cadogan took a very different view, and, if they had not done so, my efforts would have been of no avail. But it was I who found the new methods of harmonising the Great Power alliance theory [that Cadogan and Jebb believed] and the League theory’.

The last word on the triumvirate belongs to Cadogan. ‘At San Francisco, he considered the delegation had got on pretty well, though felt it necessary to add that ‘there's been no clash between Anthony [Eden] and Gladwyn. I think Anthony realises he is really useful and I've sometimes kept G in the background when it looked as if he might be getting on A's nerves! So we've had no trouble’. Jebb, however, knew the plain truth to be that ‘I never got on with Anthony, nor, for that matter, could he abide me’.<sup>15</sup>

*Regionalism.* By early 1943, Churchill was favouring the notion of ‘regional pillars’ or regional organisations as the founding structure for a future world organisation, where those closest to a dispute would naturally be most interested in securing a peaceful settlement. His ideas for a Council of Europe stemmed from this time. Jebb produced, as a result, the July 1943 paper sent to the US calling for a United Nations Commission for Europe, comprising the big three (the US, Britain and Russia) and major European powers. But the US did not approve of using regional organisations – or a decentralised approach - to the peace and security functions of the world organisation, preferring instead a single universal structure.

At Dumbarton Oaks, the British and the Americans compromised whereby ‘the [Security] Council would “encourage” the settlement of local disputes by regional agencies and use them for enforcement action “where appropriate”’<sup>16</sup>. However, at San Francisco, under pressure from Latin American nations, the US position was caught in the contradictions between its desire to reinforce the Monroe Doctrine that defined Latin America as falling within the US sphere of influence and its desire for an effective single structure for international peace and security.

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<sup>15</sup> Sean Greenwood, *Ibid.* p201.

<sup>16</sup> Evan Luard, E, *A History of the United Nations, Vol 1. The Years of Western Domination, 1945-1955*, (London 1982).

Cadogan and Jebb, however, found the way out<sup>17</sup>, namely, to accept that regional organisations could only act on the authority of the SC whilst also accepting that the Charter in no way invalidated individual or collective defence if and when the Council failed to act; thus was born Article 51 of the Charter that has invited so much subsequent concern.

One other aspect of Churchill's eye on future arrangements for peace and security in Europe deserves mention. Roosevelt was sceptical of de Gaulle, but Churchill was influential in persuading him to accept France as a great power and so facilitated France in becoming a permanent member of the Security Council.

Following his Zurich speech of September 1946, Churchill's original conception of a Council of Europe was eventually born through the Treaty of London of May 1949 signed by 10 European states. The Council's Secretary-General from 1964-69 was Peter Smithers, a former British politician.

*Colonialism.* The wording of the Atlantic Charter – 'the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live' – caused some alarm in London. Churchill did not accept that this wording implied self-determination for British colonies and British plans for the new world organisation were silent on how the UK planned to handle the fall-out from the League's mandates system. The US State Department, in contrast, had intended to propose at Dumbarton Oaks, a form of international trusteeship for all mandated territories. But the US Department of War (the 'Pentagon') made it known that the US Army wanted to retain the newly captured ex-Japanese mandated territories in the Pacific and that under no circumstances would such territories be subject to UN involvement. Thus the British were relieved when the Americans took the subject off the Dumbarton Oaks' agenda. But the issue could not be avoided in San Francisco. By then the US had come up with a scheme to differentiate the nature of its control of ex-Japanese mandated territories in the Pacific from the other trust territories inherited from the League's mandate system, namely control through the SC where the US would have a veto.

The Colonial Office, not the FO, handled the UK's interests in its mandated territories in discussions with the Americans and at San Francisco. Consequently there is little on this in documents relating to Cadogan, Jebb or Webster. Viscount Cranborne (later the Marquess of Salisbury, or 'Bobbety' in the Cadogan diaries) had ministerial responsibility in San Francisco. The key official though was Sir Hilton Poynton (Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office), who was present at both Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco. He was involved in drafting Chapter XI of the Charter (the Declaration regarding non-self-governing territories) as a compromise between the US and others' position on the need to move towards the independence of colonial peoples and the compromised position of the British, French and other colonial powers on the matter.

*Functionalism.* The British delegation, and Cadogan, Jebb and Webster individually and philosophically, were primarily concerned with proposals for maintaining international peace and security. They were less preoccupied about the promotion of international economic and social cooperation. This was for several good reasons. First, functional cooperation was less controversial, except for one important factor (see below). Second, the British had earlier decided that the League's much appreciated economic, social and technical work should be preserved so there was no need to 'reinvent the wheel'. Third, both the US and the UK had agreed that separate bodies should be established to deal with separate economic and technical

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<sup>17</sup> Philip Reynolds and Emmet Hughes, *The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-1946*, p107. (London 1976), Salisbury. UK. It was Webster who commented that Article 51 'is in fact para 7 of Art XV of the Covenant'.

issues, in contrast to the League's unitary structure. Thus, even before Dumbarton Oaks, there had already been international conferences on food and agriculture, on labour, on education, on aviation and on monetary and financial issues. These international conferences resulted, respectively, in progress towards the establishment of FAO (Hot Springs, Virginia, May 1943), in a reaffirmation and expansion of the work of the already existing ILO (Philadelphia, May 1944), of UNESCO (London Conference of European Allied Ministers of Education, 1942) and in the creation of the IMF and IBRD (Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, July 1944).

The one issue of potential controversy was the initial Soviet view that the UN should not in any way be involved in the promotion of economic and social cooperation. Stalin feared that such involvement would detract from the Organisation's main purpose of safeguarding peace. The Americans and the British disagreed. Recalling the conditions in Europe in the 1930's, they argued successfully with the Soviets that enhancement of living conditions around the world was an important factor in preserving and promoting peace.

However, the British in particular recognised that there would be need for arrangements to facilitate the coordination of the technical activities of the Specialized Agencies that were in the process of being established and for them to 'be brought into relationship' with the new world organization. The short Memorandum D of May 1944, drafted by Jebb and Webster, is devoted exclusively to such matters. The Americans were of a similar view and were promoting the notion of an economic and social council as part of the UN for this purpose. The State Department was unashamedly borrowing from Stanley Bruce's proposals for the League<sup>18</sup>.

Webster, more so than Cadogan and Jebb, realised the importance of international economic cooperation for the smaller and middle powers. He saw the advantages of ensuring support for the new organisation from these countries if the UN treated such matters in a manner equivalent to issues of peace and security. Churchill supported this at Yalta and illustrated the merit in accepting a significant role for smaller and middle powers in the Organisation by saying that 'the eagle should permit small birds to sing and care not whereof they sang'<sup>19</sup>. Thus the UK went along with the proposal at San Francisco from the smaller powers to upgrade ECOSOC to the status of a principal organ (it had not been so treated at Dumbarton Oaks) as a Websterian way of convincing such powers that the UN would be attentive to their needs and interest.

Although the British at San Francisco resisted – unsuccessfully – attempts to downplay Charter references to the objective of full employment, the Delegation did seek to give ILO a special mention in the Charter. This fell afoul of the then Soviet antipathy to ILO and a general reluctance to mention any of the proposed Specialised Agencies in the Charter.

### **C. The United Nations Preparatory Commission, London September-December 1945**

London can legitimately claim to be the birthplace of both the League of Nations and the United Nations. The League began its life in London from May 1919 to October 1920. The United Nations, likewise, was established in London, from August 1945 to February 1946. The former was conceived in Paris, the latter in San Francisco.

At the conclusion of the San Francisco Conference delegates agreed to form a Preparatory Commission comprising all those member states present at San Francisco, for the purpose of arranging for the first meetings of the GA, the SC, ECOSOC, the Trusteeship Council, for the

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<sup>18</sup> League of Nations, *The Development of International Cooperation in Economic and Social Affairs*. (Geneva 1939).

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Charles Bohlen, *Witness of History*, (London 1963), and in Martin Gilbert *Churchill and America*, (New York 2005).

setting up of the Secretariat and for convening the International Court of Justice. It is thanks to the success of the Preparatory Commission that these six principal organs of the UN were able to start work so quickly.

It was also agreed at San Francisco that the Preparatory Commission would be based in London and that the British government would bear its initial costs. As the Secretary of the San Francisco Conference, Alger Hiss, refused to serve it fell to the British government to designate the Executive Secretary of the Commission, and as Jebb says in his Memoirs he 'was a fairly obvious candidate'<sup>20</sup>. The Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission started work in London on 16 August with a formidable list of distinguished members<sup>21</sup>. The full Commission met from 24 November – 22 December. The Charter was ratified on 24 October 1945, whereupon Jebb was appointed Acting SG.

By then, there was a Labour Government in Britain with Clement Atlee as Prime Minister. The old League hand, convinced pacifist and internationalist Philip Noel-Baker, was made Minister of State at the FO under Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary. All the key personalities of the new Government genuinely wanted to make the UN work effectively, largely on the basis of the view of Bevin that 'no nation stood to gain as much from the creation of a strong international authority as Britain, a Power with world-wide commitments which she no longer had the strength to meet by herself.'<sup>22</sup>

Jebb started recruiting for the Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission immediately on his appointment: David Owen, from the FO, was the first recruit, Brian Urquhart the second. Interestingly, Jebb's Memoirs make no reference to his collaboration with Owen in the Preparatory Commission while Urquhart is mentioned. In May 1945 Urquhart wished to leave the Army. Arnold Toynbee, still head of the FO Research Department whose son Philip had been at Oxford with Urquhart, offered him a job. When this proved unsuitable, Toynbee, remembering that Urquhart had told him of his pre-war ambition to work for the League of Nations, put him in touch with Jebb. 'He walked into my office in uniform ...I engaged him there and then, nor did I ever regret it' says Jebb in his Memoirs<sup>23</sup>. Other British staff mentioned by Jebb include Martin Hill, who had worked in the League and later became a UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) (see Part II), Henry Hope, 'a one-armed war hero who went back to business' ran the Administrative Section of the secretariat and Vernon Duckworth Barker was first in charge of press and public relations and then went onto to work for the UN Department of Public Information (also see next Section).

The staffing of the Preparatory Commission was very largely British. The Office of the Executive Secretary (Jebb, Owen, Urquhart plus assistants and secretaries) was with one exception exclusively British, as was the staff of the Administrative and almost all of the Public Relations Sections. Only in the case of the chiefs of sections that serviced the eight committees of the Commission was there any geographical distribution in the senior posts.<sup>24</sup> The Preparatory Commission also benefitted from the earlier League's experience; at least twelve British members of the League of Nations secretariat worked for the Commission, mostly in the language services or in public relations. The FO made available some of their staff. Those closely associated with the work of the Commission were Archibald Mackenzie, a press officer at Dumbarton Oaks and

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<sup>20</sup> Gladwyn Jebb, *Memoirs*, p173. (New York, 1972).

<sup>21</sup> Including Lester Pearson (Canada), Wellington Koo (China), Jan Masaryck (Czechoslovakia), Philip Noel-Baker (UK), Nasrullah Entezam (Iran) Andrei Gromyko (USSR) and from the US, Edward Stettinius and Adlai Stevenson.

<sup>22</sup> Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary 1945-1951*, page 111, (New York. 1985).

<sup>23</sup> Gladwyn Jebb *Ibid.* p174.

<sup>24</sup> See Handbook (Revised Edition) Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, 24 November 1945.

San Francisco and William Tanzer a press liaison officer at the London meetings who subsequently moved to New York as a 'Mohican' (see Text Box) working in the Press Section<sup>25</sup>.

The Preparatory Commission produced in short order a set of decisions that determined how the six principal organs would function. For the Assembly there would be six committees (political, economic, social, humanitarian, administrative and legal) comprising all members, plus a smaller advisory group on financial matters and a general committee to run the Assembly. All this was a replication of the League. Rules of procedure for the GA, the SC and ECOSOC were adopted. There was agreement for the Security Council to establish the Military Staff Committee, a particular Jebb interest. The subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC – five commissions – were also decided upon. The new system of trusteeship was launched. The notion of relationship agreements was established, whereby the about to be created Specialised Agencies would be brought into relationship with the UN, through ECOSOC. The system of privileges and immunities was settled. An integrated structure for the secretariat was laid down that rejected the Soviet proposal for a separate secretariat unit for each principal organ. Additionally, how to publicise and promote the work of the UN through public information was approved. Provisional staff regulations and staff rules were prepared. Budgetary and financial arrangements – the financial year, format of the budget, arrangements for the apportionment of expenses, the currency of account – were all agreed. The Preparatory Commission also decided that certain functions, powers and activities of the League should be transferred to the UN and/or to the Specialised Agencies.

On that last point, the Preparatory Commission was - perhaps unwittingly – remarkably prescient, for it also observed:

‘while the United Nations and particularly its Economic and Social Council, has the task of co-ordinating the policies and activities of specialised agencies, this task can be performed only if Members individually will assist in making co-ordination possible. The acceptance by each Member of this responsibility for harmonizing its policies and activities in the different fields covered by the specialised agencies and the United Nations will prevent **confusion and conflict** [emphasis added] and enable the United Nations to achieve the purposes of Chapter IX of the Charter.’

Mirroring the obstacles faced by the League, the most difficult problem was the choice of a site for the UN, a decision postponed from San Francisco. It came down to a choice between the US and ‘Europe’, the latter meaning Geneva without actually being so stated. Philip Noel-Baker made an ‘emotional speech for Geneva, rejecting the idea of being haunted by ghosts of past failure’<sup>26</sup>. As the UK’s representative, Noel-Baker brought ‘the patience and negotiating skills forged by a lifetime of international peace-making and the goal-orientated steadiness of a middle-distance runner in three Olympic Games’<sup>27</sup>. The voting on the choice took place in two rounds on 18 December 1945. In the first, whether to accept ‘Europe’ as the site, the members of the General Committee voted 23 in favour (including the UK) and 25 against, with two abstentions, one of which was the US. It was a close call indeed. In the second vote, on whether to accept the US as the site, 30 voted in favour, and 14 including the UK, voted against, with 6 abstentions.

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<sup>25</sup> See Bill Jackson (Ed) *A Guide for Researchers to the United Nations Career Records Project at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford*, (2016) pp 39-118.

<sup>26</sup> Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, (London, 1987), page 97

<sup>27</sup> Charlene Mires, Charlene, *Capital of the World – the Race to Host the United Nations*, (New York 2013), p86.

The first meeting of the GA took place in Central Hall, Westminster which 'had been transformed by the Ministry of Works ... every delegate had a beautiful light-blue chair, rather similar to those used at our coronations'. Attlee made an 'excellent'<sup>28</sup> speech:

'let us be clear as to what is our ultimate aim. It is not just the negation of war, but the creation of a world of security and freedom, of a world which is governed by justice and the moral law. We desire to assert the pre-eminence of right over might and the general good against the selfish and sectional aims'<sup>29</sup>.

But there was controversy from the start, such as concerning the election of the President of the Assembly. The favourite, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Trygve Lie was outvoted by the Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, an anti-communist Westerner. The Soviets preferred Lie, the US abstained, while the others preferred Spaak.

One of the other first acts of the Assembly was to elect the six non-permanent SC members. That accomplished, the SC at its first meeting in Church House, was immediately embroiled with a Persian complaint about the Soviets not withdrawing their troops from Iran by the end of the war. Then it was the turn of ECOSOC to hold its first session, also in Church House.

Much interest and excitement was naturally caused by the election of the Secretary-General. Various names had been canvassed, including Eisenhower and Stettinius of the US and Eden and even Jebb, before there emerged the understanding that the SG should not be a national of any of the permanent members of the Security Council. Various names were then circulated, including Lester Pearson of Canada (the UK and US choice), the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Stanoje Simic, Eelco van Kleffens of the Netherlands and Wincenty Rzymoski of Poland. It was only then that nobody opposed Trygve Lie which meant he got the 'most impossible job in the world'. Urquhart in his Memoirs records how Stettinius, the US Secretary of State, had to ask for Lie to be identified to him, before in his nominating speech he 'referred to Lie as a household word, a figure known to all the world, a leader in the Allied struggle for freedom, etc'.<sup>30</sup> It was for Urquhart the perfect illustration of the cynicism of the selection process. Immediately on the election of the SG, Urquhart transferred his services from Jebb to Lie and thereby launched his highly distinguished international career (see Text Box).

Lie's election meant the end of Jebb's spell as Acting Secretary-General. Owen was eventually appointed ASG for Economic and Social Affairs, as part of the carve-up among the 'permanent five' of the senior posts in the Secretariat. This ran completely contrary to the spirit of the discussions in the Preparatory Commission to leave exclusive responsibility to the SG in the selection of senior staff for the Organisation.

Notwithstanding the problems and difficulties, the work of the Preparatory Commission was extraordinarily productive and efficient. A great deal was achieved in a short period of time. From that point of view, the UN began auspiciously. To have drafted, signed and ratified a Charter, to have held the first meetings of the principal organs of a new organisation and to have begun to set up the secretariat – all of this in less than a year after the Yalta Summit of February 1945 was in retrospect quite exceptional. The British are entitled to be proud of what was achieved, not only by politicians such as Eden, Bevin, Noel-Baker and Richard Law<sup>31</sup> but also by officials, especially Cadogan, Jebb, Webster, Owen and Urquhart.

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<sup>28</sup> Gladwyn, Jebb Ibid. p181.

<sup>29</sup> Brian Urquhart, Ibid. p99.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Urquhart, Ibid. pp99-100

<sup>31</sup> Minister of State, Foreign Office and subsequently Lord Cranbourne.



Urquhart quotes Ernest Bevin as saying of Jebb that he did ‘more than any other man, official or politician to make the UN into a “living thing”<sup>32</sup>. At least both Cadogan and Jebb experienced at first-hand what they had created, Cadogan as the UK’s first Permanent Representative to the UN in New York (1946-1950) and Jebb as the second (1950-1954). An account of their performances at that time would take us beyond the scope of this study.

### **Text Box: The First Two Mohicans**

Those UN employees who first embarked for New York on 15 March 1946 and those who also joined in early 1947 became known to later generations of UN employees as ‘The Mohicans’. Some are mentioned in later parts of this paper, but the first two UN employees to take up positions in New York were David Owen and Brian Urquhart. Both Owen and Urquhart came from families with socialist backgrounds and were firm believers and exemplars of an independent international civil service. Owen set out his philosophy in a lecture to Liverpool University. In it he particularly emphasises the role of British nationals and recalls the importance of the British military in peacekeeping operations in Cyprus, noting one instance when a British soldier was accused of being part of the former colonial administration and who responded: ‘Oi, we’re not bloody English: we’re bloody United Nations’. He also recalls that: ‘in more recent years thousands of our fellow country men and women ... have contributed their professional ability, vitality and devotion to this new way of serving a high ideal. ... A small group of young Britons, most of them in their middle twenties, are now winning golden opinions for their splendid work as junior administrators, as part of a voluntary services scheme’<sup>1</sup> (see Part III).

**David Owen** (1925 -1990), Deputy Executive Secretary to the Preparatory Commission, was the first staff member recruited to the UN. As a former FO official he worked in the League of Nations Department and participated in the dissolution of the League. He had been involved in designing the UN system and was on the UK delegation to San Francisco. His contribution to the economic and development remit of the organization was immense. David Owen’s initial position was as Director of the UN’s Division of Economic Affairs but his development of the first field programme of technical assistance to developing countries was his great achievement. This programme, known as the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) provided funding for small-scale projects and individuals through the Operational Executive (OPEX) programme. The two programmes were administered by senior staff assigned to developing countries through the UN’s Technical Assistance Bureau (UNTAB). In due course EPTA was merged with a somewhat larger programme, the UN Special Fund, which was funded by voluntary contributions from member states. In 1965 the merged units became the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Owen became co-administrator of UNDP and his system of UNTAB Resident Representatives still exists today. Owen’s final career move was as Head of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

**Brian Urquhart** (1919 – present) became the second UN employee and arguably has had the most significant UN career of the twentieth century. As he recalls: ‘in those early days we all did whatever job needed doing. We moved furniture, received Foreign Ministers, helped the Press and organized meetings of the Committees’<sup>1</sup>. Urquhart has worked closely for six SGs and has held vital senior positions for longer than any other UN employee, including several spells as a Secretary-General’s Special Representative. His first position was in the Office of the Under Secretary-General (USG) for Special Political Affairs and from 1974 to 1986 he was USG for Special Political Affairs. Following the Suez crisis he was put in charge of the first UN Peacekeeping operation, and had similar responsibilities in the Congo, Middle East and Cyprus. On being rescued from Moise Tshombe’s mercenaries at the height of the Katanga crisis he was reported in the Press as saying: ‘better beaten than eaten’. As reported in the *New York Times* (19 December 1982) during yet another unstable situation in South Lebanon, US Under-Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger advised the US Press that the ‘United States had been in touch with Governments and quarters in the area to try to prevent hostilities. Pressed several times on the meaning of ‘quarters’ Eagleburger eventually replied: ‘oh, you mean Brian’. On his retirement, in 1986, he became an authority on UN reform and his joint book with the Irishman Erskine Childers (*a World in Need of Leadership*), has become a leading analysis of reforms needed by the UN. He also published highly regarded biographies of Dag Hammarskjöld and of Ralph Bunche.

While Jebb's status as one of the architects of the UN is quite clear and whilst his SC interventions delighted the American public in the early 1950's, when he was the British permanent representative to the UN, he subsequently distanced himself on the grounds that the UN was not living up to the original concepts. According to Greenwood, Jebb was a sponsor of Dag Hammarskjöld as a successor to Trygve Lie. This is somewhat ironical as later, when Jebb was the Ambassador in Paris (but kept ignorant of the Anglo-French collusion at Suez), he was faced with a dilemma. In keeping with his instincts as a 'great power man' as long as the UN could usefully support Britain's interests and actions, he was all in favour of the institution. But over Suez, where the UN was 'likely to prove a divided vessel with no certainty at all that its tangled procedures would not go against Britain, he was a sceptic. ...What Suez revealed was that, when the cards were stacked against Britain, [Jebb] was not a UN man'<sup>33</sup>. How Jebb as Ambassador to the UN would have handled matters when Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General was defending the interests of the smaller countries against those of the great powers is a 'what if' question of history to which regrettably we will never know the answer!

#### **D. British staff in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC)**

The wartime alliance of Allies fighting the Axis powers was known as the United Nations and predated the establishment of the Organisation itself. Under that rubric, two important but short-lived organisations were established, UNRRA, November 1943-September 1948 and the UNWCC late 1943-March 1948. Although the two organisations did not become part of the United Nations Organization they are included in this account because in both organisations British nationals played important roles.

**UNRRA.** An agency with immediate and narrowly focused objectives, UNRRA was funded from 1945 to 1947 mainly by the US, and during that time it repatriated millions of refugees as well as managing hundreds of refugee camps in Austria, Germany and Italy. On its demise there were still 650,000 European refugees, so consequently the International Refugee Organization continued its work, which eventually became the UN High Commission for Refugees in 1951.<sup>34</sup> Several former League staff were drafted into UNRRA including Arthur Salter (by now Lord Salter) as Deputy Director and Mary McGeachey as Director of Welfare.

**UNWCC.** The Commission was established at the initiative of the US, the UK and other allied nations to investigate 'war crimes committed against nationals of the United Nations' and to report thereon to the governments concerned. Thus, the Commission was assigned responsibility to collect 'evidence of war crimes for the arrest and trial of alleged war criminals'. UNWCC though had no power of prosecution; it was the responsibility of the countries concerned to try the alleged perpetrators of war crimes in their national courts.<sup>35</sup> The Commission, which acted in both Europe and the Far East, was efficacious.<sup>36</sup>

The FO took the lead in establishing UNWCC, which was based in London. The two Chairmen of the Commission were both British international lawyers with extensive experience. The first,

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<sup>33</sup> Sean Greenwood, *Ibid.* p349.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Davies and Richard Woodward, *International Organizations a Companion*, (Cheltenham, UK, 2014) p60.

<sup>35</sup> Statement by John Simon, Lord Chancellor, House of Lords, 7 October 1942. Source accessed 4 October 2019 [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United-Nations-War-Crimes-Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United-Nations-War-Crimes-Commission).

<sup>36</sup> See Dan Plesch, *Human Rights after Hitler – the Lost History of Prosecuting Axis War Crimes*, (Washington D.C., 2017).

Sir Cecil Hurst, had a long background in international law. He attended the 1907 Hague Peace Conference, served as a legal adviser in the FO, promoted the development of international law through the League before becoming a Judge and president of the Permanent Court of International Justice (1934-36). He retired from UNWCC in January 1945 on grounds of ill-health and was succeeded by Lord Wright of Durley, 'a very senior British judge [with] a reputation for creating sound if somewhat drily written legal precedents'<sup>37</sup>.

The Commission's first SG was H. Mackinnon Wood, a Foreign Office Legal Adviser who had worked in the League. Recalled to the FO in September 1945, he was succeeded by another British official, Colonel G. A. Ledingham. Two further British officials, Lieutenant-Colonel H. Wade and Mr. G. Brand, also joined the secretariat which was always a very small organization.<sup>38</sup>

## Part II - The Early Staffing<sup>39</sup> of the New Organizations

Since the senior-most posts in international organizations are considered by governments to be the most desirable appointments, the maxim 'to the victors the spoils' was not only applied to the League after the First World War but also to its several successor organizations in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the period 1945-1951, as new organizations of the UN system were being established, seven executive heads were American, three were British and six were from other allied nations. The UK appointees included the two most eminent academic specialists in their fields, the biologist and science populariser Julian Huxley (UNESCO) and the nutritionist John Boyd-Orr (FAO). The third was John Alexander-Sinclair, Executive Director of the incipient UNHCR. Although not initially an executive head, Eric Wyndham-White was the founder and first Executive Secretary of GATT but when it morphed from a quadrennial conference to an organization he was appointed Gatt's first Director-General (DG) in 1965.

In 1946, a number of staff also transited from the League of Nations. These included 18 Britons, some of whom were appointed to senior managerial positions. The most prominent were the nutritionist Wallace Aykroyd (see FAO below), Martin Hill, an economist, who joined the UN Department of Economic Affairs and later became UN ASG responsible for inter-agency affairs, Percy Watterson, Chief of Budget and Finance at FAO. Wilfred Jenks, a former ILO staff member, returned to ILO and assumed senior positions before eventually became the Director-General in 1970.<sup>40</sup> At the end of the war, many Britons worked for the short-lived UNRRA (Section D above) and several then moved across into the developing UN System and their contributions ranged widely over all levels of staff. The new organizations also benefited from the experience of some senior League staff, Rachel Crowdy's contribution is outlined in the section on WHO below, Arthur Salter was chairman of the World Bank's Advisory Council in 1948 and Alexander Loveday provided several organizations with the benefit of his League experience.

1946 also saw the recruitment of several other influential British academics including Joseph Needham (UNESCO Director of Science) and Hans Singer. The latter was recruited for the UN Department of Economic Affairs and later together with Raul Prebich became renown for

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<sup>37</sup> Dan Plesch, *Ibid.* p55.

<sup>38</sup> See 1948 *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War*, Chapter 6, page 119, <http://www.unwcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/UNWCC-history-ch6.pdf>. Source accessed 4 October 2019

<sup>39</sup> To recall our Introduction, Part II deals essentially with UK staff of the new organisations. It is beyond the scope of the present study to describe the contribution of British consultants to the agencies, or of British members of expert groups: in a number of cases, these contributions were quite significant. It should also be noted that Part II covers the period up to, broadly, the end of the 1960's.

<sup>40</sup> Several years later, in 1980, Jenk's' son, Bruce, worked for UNDP and became a UN ASG.

having formulated the Prebich-Singer terms of trade thesis, a building block of the ‘structuralist’ theory of economic development. Others were David Lubbock, Personal Assistant to Boyd-Orr, and Mary Smieton, who having worked for Ernest Bevin, was seconded to the UN as its first Director of Personnel.

In effect, UK nationals were everywhere in the new organisations, though not necessarily at high levels<sup>41</sup>. Because of the attraction of working overseas, after many wartime years of hardship and travel restrictions, many female staff signed on as secretaries or personal assistants, despite having no prior experience of international service. As a result there were sufficient applicants to ensure a supply of well-qualified persons at junior levels. Many worked themselves up the ladder to higher positions. Margaret Bruce became Secretary to the Human Rights Commission and Imogen Mollett became Chief of Recruitment, Programmes Section. Some lower-level League staff, for example Kathleen Midwinter-Vergin, and Angela Butler also joined new or revived international organizations, such as ILO, after the wartime hiatus.

### **A. David Owen and the UN**

In pursuing the UN’s economic objectives David Owen recruited some of the finest and most distinguished of the Britons who had worked for the UN in its early days. They included Hans Singer (see above), Sidney Dell, a major influence in developing UNCTAD; Harold Caustin who worked with Robert Jackson (both of whom worked for UNRRA) and Margaret Anstee (see later) on the ‘Capacity Study’, the first major review of UN technical assistance programmes. Additionally, there was Andrew Brown, the Chief Economist of an early technical assistance programme which was designed to provide individual technical specialists; Garth ap Rees and John Saunders, another UNRRA recruit, both later to become UNDP Resident Representatives and the latter an Assistant Administrator of UNDP. Nicholas Kaldor, another prominent economist, was recruited by Gunnar Myrdal to work as Director of Research and Planning in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE). Kaldor was also the principal author of the 1949 UN group of experts’ report on full employment.<sup>42</sup>

Along with Brian Urquhart (see Text Box), David Owen recruited (in a parallel manner to the League) a number of other British nationals to the UN at the end of the war from the military as well as from war-related occupations. An interesting case is that of Walter Hoffman, Secretary to the UN’s Fifth Committee (Administration and Finance) who eventually contributed to the creation of the UN postal service. Another was Granville Fletcher, a bilingual editor and later chief of staff to the Director of the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG). Richard Symonds was recruited for the staff of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan, mediating over Kashmir. Thomas Kirkbridge became the UN’s Budget Director.

Several staff were moved from the British Civil Service to the UN. They included: John Alexander-Sinclair of the FO, eventually the Executive Director of UNHCR, Andrew Stark, recruited from the British Permanent Mission in New York as USG for Administration and Management (1968-1971) and, in 1948, Barrie Davies came from the UK Central Statistical Office and over a 25-year career rose to become Chief of the UN Statistical Branch and then Director of Statistics at the UN-ECE. Michael Kaser was also at UN-ECE and worked alongside Nita Watts, a Treasury economist, who became ECE Deputy Director. Margaret Anstee joined UNDP and later became the first female UN ASG and head of a peacekeeping mission.

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<sup>41</sup> Brief records of many UK nationals who worked for UN organizations are to be found in: Bill Jackson, (Ed.), *Ibid*, (2016).

<sup>42</sup> John Toye, and Richard Toye, *The UN and Global Political Economy – Trade, Finance and Development*, p93, (2004), Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN.

Compared to the new specialized agencies, fewer UN staff came from the British colonial service although some field specialists were recruited as public administration advisers. Among the more notable was Alexander MacFarquhar, a successor to Mary Smieton as Director of Personnel (and later a USG) In the 1950s and 1960s, throughout the UN system, more field-level technical assistance experts were recruited from the UK than from any other country (4,811 compared to 3,966 US nationals and 3,215 French nationals between 1950 and 1964).<sup>43</sup> By 1968, of the 5,507 UN and UN Agency headquarters' posts subject to geographical representation, the UK was still well-represented, its nationals staffing 532 posts compared to 787 Americans and 436 French.<sup>44</sup>

### **B. John Boyd-Orr and FAO**<sup>45</sup>

Boyd-Orr contributed to the League of Nations' work on food production and price stability. His studies of British nutritional levels showed that malnutrition was rife even in advanced economies and led to the recognition that nutritional standards were essential to good health. In the Second World War he helped develop a wartime rationing programme, so successful that it raised nutritional standards despite extreme food shortages. Although not proposed by the UK (unthinkable in the present day) his international reputation ensured his election as FAO's first DG.

Boyd-Orr was a strong personality and an activist, whose outstanding intellectual leadership resulted in proposals which, although sometimes rejected or postponed through an initial lack of resources, eventually came to fruition. He established FAO's technical competence by giving special attention to the creation of an Economics and Statistics Division in May 1946, since that was essential to his proposal for a World Food Board. The post-war food crisis led to his proposing such an organisation to stabilize agricultural prices, manage international reserves and provide food aid. This idea was rejected by FAO members reluctant to unleash a too powerful institution that could challenge their sovereignty; however, they did establish an International Emergency Food Council, and Boyd-Orr's overarching idea eventually took hold and, conceptually, was the origin of the World Food Programme (WFP). He additionally proposed a clearing house to collect and exchange genetic material, a role eventually assumed by the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. He also initiated the first *World Food Survey* in 1946, covering 90% of the world's population, a publication that FAO has continued to produce decennially.

The moral and intellectual compass for his leadership came from his strong (Presbyterian) social conscience and a belief that science should underlie FAO politics. He imparted to his subordinates a sense of their mission along with his own ideals. In the words of his obituary he 'could bring conferences of government officials to their feet cheering his forthrightness and obvious sincerity'<sup>46</sup>. His political skills however were weak, and he resigned in 1948 in protest against the narrow mandate that states gave him, saying that 'the people want bread and we are to give them paper', an ominous prophecy of FAO's future. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949.

Among Boyd Orr's early British recruits were Wallace Aykroyd, Director of the FAO Nutrition Division (and a former senior League official), Lamartine Yates, head of the Commercial Policy Branch, L.J. Vernell initially Chief of Technical Development and then Chief of the FAO Policy and Planning Section, G.E. Overington, Director of Administrative Services, and G Scott

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Symonds, *United Nations Career Records Project, Report of Stage 1*, (1992).

<sup>44</sup> US Congress, *House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, Hearing 1969 Volume3, (Washington D.C 1969).

<sup>45</sup> Michael Davies and Richard Woodward, *Ibid* p93.

<sup>46</sup> *The Times*, 26 June 1971.

Robinson, Director of the Agriculture Division. Herbert Broadly, who later became Deputy Director General (DDG) on Boyd-Orr's departure, recruited Jean Fairley as Director of the FAO Budget Division (1959-1964). Thus, the intellectual contribution of British nationals to the early days of FAO was considerable.

The 1950s and 1960s saw many agriculturalists from the former British colonial service join the organization in its field projects and a number of them eventually moved to senior positions in Rome, such as Norman Wright, formerly of the Colonial Agricultural Advisory Council, who was appointed DDG (1959-1963) in succession to Herbert Broadley; the forester, Michael Arnol, became Chief of the Forestry Planning Unit; and Cyril Groom, an adviser to the Director of Agriculture. Others contributed considerably to overall policy development and agricultural knowledge, for example the entomologist Reginald Rainey discovered that the desert locust swarmed downwind.

At higher levels of the FAO British influence waned somewhat over time, with only Cliff Pennison (formerly Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) becoming ADG Administration and Finance. John Gulland, one of the world's leading fisheries scientists, having moved to FAO from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries developed 'virtual population analysis' of fish stocks. Declan Walton transferred from UNHCR (where he dealt with the refugee crisis following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution) in the mid-1960s becoming Deputy Director General in 1990.

### **C. Julian Huxley and UNESCO**

Another globally eminent scientist, formerly active in the League's technical work, who became an executive head was Julian Huxley, although the League was only peripheral to inter-war educational policies. Like Boyd-Orr, Huxley 'infected colleagues with enthusiasm'<sup>47</sup> and advocated many policy initiatives including an emphasis on combatting global illiteracy although he was less autocratic and by his own admission a poor administrator.<sup>48</sup> Huxley came from an eminent academic family connected to Charles Darwin; his brother Aldous was a best-selling author and another brother, Andrew, was to become a 1963 Nobel prize-winner in physiology and medicine. Huxley a biologist, ornithologist and a science populariser, wrote a large number of books on wide-ranging aspects of science. On leaving UNESCO he was a founder of the World Wildlife Fund and eventually became Professor of Zoology at Kings College, London.

Appointed as Executive Secretary to the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Preparatory Commission, Huxley became a strong advocate for UNESCO's science remit. In furtherance of this aim he appointed another eminent British scientist, the microbiologist Joseph Needham, as the Organization's first Director of Science. Previously Needham had pursued the concept of a worldwide scientific organization to encourage cooperation in research for several years. He had been working in China when he was recruited (studying the origins of Chinese scientific innovation and as a wartime scientific coordinator for the Allies). On his return to the UK he was met by J.G. Crowther the British Council's science officer who had also been recruited by Huxley and who was working at the time in UNESCO's temporary offices near Victoria Station, London, before its move to Paris. Needham is credited with ensuring the 'S' was firmly placed within UNESCO's remit<sup>49</sup>. Unlike Huxley, Needham was adept at dealing with bureaucracy although he fell foul of the US over his

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<sup>47</sup> Nihal Singh, *The Rise and Fall of UNESCO*, (Abingdon, UK, 1987).

<sup>48</sup> Michael Davies, and Richard Woodward, *Ibid.* p227.

<sup>49</sup> Before Needham joined UNESCO it was referred to as the UN Educational and Cultural Organization - UNESCO.

seriously left-wing views and for advocating establishment of UNESCO scientific country offices. This was because the CIA felt they would be a conduit for infiltrating into national scientific secrets - this being not long after the US had developed the atomic bomb.<sup>50</sup>

Although former League staff (principally in language and editorial occupations) joined UNESCO, the organization benefitted less from the exodus of colonial administrators than had FAO. Including Needham (a Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge) it did however attract a number of other British academics such as Lionel Elvin, Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge and Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford. He became Director of UNESCO's Education Department in 1950 and later went on to found Amnesty International. The anthropologist Alan Elliott from LSE developed UNESCO's fellowship training programmes in 1952. A number of others worked for UNESCO in the field, establishing national training institutes and developing educational curricula.

Another eminent British academic, appointed ADG in 1971, was Richard Hoggart well-known for his best-selling book *The Uses of Literacy*. However, Hoggart became disillusioned with the organization's leadership and was the first person to write a well-reasoned critique of the management and bureaucracy surrounding an international organization (*An Idea and its Servants, UNESCO from Within*). Later those British staff who went on to develop serious critiques and proposals for international organizational reform included Brain Urquhart and Erskine Childers on the UN and John Abbott on FAO.<sup>51</sup>

#### **D. Wilfred Jenks, Harold Butler and ILO**

Since the time it was an offshoot of the League Britons had had a distinguished role in the International Labour Organization (ILO). Harold Butler, Executive Secretary of the initial ILO Conference, was appointed by ILO's Director Albert Thomas as his Deputy in charge of administrative matters. Subsequently, on Thomas' death in 1932, Butler became the DG where he encouraged the USA to join ILO which it did in 1934. Later the war disrupted ILO's operations. When he resigned in protest against a major power pressing him "relentlessly" to select a national in a senior appointment, which he described as "a fatal precedent for all future administrations" he returned to British academia.<sup>52</sup> Wilfred Jenks, a legal specialist and polymath, stayed with the ILO throughout the war and drafted the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944) before eventually becoming DG in 1970.

Reflecting ILO's tripartite character, post-war British recruits came from the trade union movement, the private sector and many came from academia too, although not in such large numbers as at FAO. Several worked for ILO in the field, either running vocational training programmes or designing cooperatives and social security systems. Ronald Chamberlin, for example, had implemented the Beverage proposals on social security in the British Ministry of National Insurance. During the period under review in this paper only two Britons rose to high levels after Jenks - Jack Martin who held a succession of senior positions before being appointed ADG responsible for ILO's technical programmes and Patrick Denby who became ADG for Finance and General Services in the late 1970s. Another Briton, Bill Farr became Chief of the ILO Personnel Department in 1980.

#### **E. WHO**

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<sup>50</sup> Simon Winchester, *Bomb, Book and Compass*, (London, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> John Abbott, *Politics and Poverty, A Critique of the Food and Agriculture Organization*, (London, 1992).

<sup>52</sup> Jacques Lemoine. *The International Civil Servant - an Endangered Species*, (The Hague, 1995).

Rachel Crowdy, the League's Head of the Social Questions Section, drafted the constitution of the League's Health Organization (LHO). Although she left the League in 1931, she remained interested and involved in its social work and eventually participated in the drafting one of the earliest human rights instruments adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1949,<sup>53</sup> the UN Convention on the Suppression in Traffic of Persons and of Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. WHO was founded 1948 in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The idealism that marked the creation of the UN system as a whole was apparent in its objective – 'the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health'. The LHO was the precursor of WHO whose historical concentration has been, and continues to be, on tackling infectious diseases. A number of former League staff from the Technical Preparatory Committee developed WHO's constitution. Melville Mackenzie, served on WHO's Executive Board, becoming its Chairman in 1953. Previously he had been chair of a joint WHO/UNICEF Committee on Health Policy. Driven by US desire not to integrate the Pan-American Health Organization into a centralized system, WHO's distinctive feature is the independent governance structure for each of its six regional offices. It is not surprising, therefore, that an attraction for many was to work at the regional level. Dr Norman Begg, who had trained at Aberdeen University under Boyd-Orr and was UNRRA's Chief of Medical Services in Poland, joined WHO in Geneva in 1945. Later appointed as first Director of the European Regional Office he was credited with welding together widely divergent national views on health issues.<sup>54</sup>

The 1950s and 1960s saw many nurses and medical doctors attracted to work on WHO field projects. Nurses were often involved in training local health staff while doctors also contributed to eradication programmes such as malaria or smallpox. Dr Mohammed Sharif was recruited from the British army for field work but eventually transferred to UNRWA as Director of West Bank Operations. Other doctors came from the colonial services, such as James Cullen and Donald Griffith or from the British Medical Research Council such as David Macfadyen.

#### **F. The International Financial and Trade Institutions (IBRD, IMF and GATT)**

As an exception to our rule that Part II covers only British staffing of the new organisations, it is simply impossible to talk about the early work of the IMF and IBRD without mentioning the immense contribution of John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) to the creation of both organisations. At Bretton Woods in August 1944, Keynes' radical plans for an international clearing-union and for strong incentives for countries to avoid substantial trade deficits or trade surpluses was at variance with US global economic dominance. The Bretton Woods system was a compromise that reflected the greater American negotiating strength. Nevertheless, Keynes' fingerprints were everywhere in the establishment of both organisations.

As described by Patricia Clavin,<sup>55</sup> the structures of the two financial institutions reflect US influence which, at IBRD at least, has continued ever since the Second World War. Its President has always been a US national. IMF's Managing Director has always been a European, but never a Britain. In its early years only one Briton reached high office at IBRD and that was William Iliffe. Initially he was the Bank's Loan Director and supported the shift in Bank lending from reconstruction to development after the impact of the Marshall Plan had made Bank lending less relevant in Europe. In particular, he championed its focus on a development programme in Columbia.<sup>56</sup> After having successfully negotiated the Indo-Pakistan agreement on sharing the

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<sup>53</sup> David Macfadyen, et al. *Eric Drummond and His Legacies, the League of Nations and the Beginnings of Global Governance*, (London 2019).

<sup>54</sup> Obituary, *Chronicle of the World Health Organization*, vol. 10 no. 7, 1956.

<sup>55</sup> Patricia Clavin. *Securing the World Economy*, (Oxford 2013).

<sup>56</sup> Michelle Alachevich, *The Political Economy of the World Bank*, (Washington D.C. 2009), p15.



waters of the River Indus, he was made the Bank's Vice-President. The academic economist Alexander Cairncross was appointed as the first Director of the Economic Development Institute (a training facility for senior administrators from member countries). Cairncross' brother John was the 'fifth man,' one of a group of Cambridge-educated spies who passed secrets to the Soviet Union in the 1950s. John Cairncross was recruited by FAO in error for his brother<sup>57</sup>, where he eventually became a technical editor. Unsurprisingly, given that the Bank is based on economic ideas advocated by Keynes, the Bank hired several Cambridge educated economists in its early days. Three Britons joined the Bank's Economics Department in 1947 (at that time the most influential of the Bank's departments), Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, Maurice Perkins and Benjamin King. The last named worked from 1947 to 1967 in the Department, including a spell in the President's Office.<sup>58</sup>

Several Britons joined IBRD from the colonial services; three in the Bank's Agricultural Department, the academic, Lionel Evans, who eventually became its Director, Andrew Seager and Donald Pickering. Stanley Please became Chief Economist of the East Africa Regional Office and later, when adviser to the Bank's Vice-President of Operations, helped implement the Bank's programme on Structural Adjustment Lending. Two engineers were also recruited from the colonial services. Gavin Wyatt as Director of the Europe and Middle-East Projects Department and Herbert Thruscutt moved from UNESCO to become IBRD's Senior Highways Engineer in South Asia. Reg Clarke was recruited from the Nigerian Ministry of Finance and eventually became the Bank's first Director of Personnel. From its inception the Bank ran a training programme for its junior recruits. Thus an early British beneficiary was Margaret Wolfson who became the Bank's representative in Guatemala. As the Bank grew in size it started to recruit from a wider pool, particularly from the private sector, although economists were favoured over technical specialists. Only a few Britons joined the IMF in its early days. John Alves was initially seconded from the British Treasury and, over time, a few came from the Bank of England. Joseph Gold an academic from Harvard, following several years' work in the Legal Department. became the Fund's General Counsel.

One of ECOSOC's earliest decisions in London in February 1946, in London was to call for a conference on international trade and to establish a preparatory committee for the conference. Sir Eric Wyndham White, a British economist educated at the London School of Economics (LSE), who had worked in the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the British Embassy in Washington and for UNRRA was appointed as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Committee of The Interim Commission for the International Trade Organisation (ICITO). He fulfilled a similar position for the eventual United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment that met in Havana, Cuba, from November 1947 to March 1948. Following the refusal of the US Senate to ratify the Havana Charter – and thus nullifying the anticipated International Trade Organization - Wyndham White became Executive Secretary of GATT that supervised successive rounds of trade negotiations to reduce tariffs among the major industrial countries. He retired as GATT Director General (DG), the predecessor of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in May 1968.

### **G. The Earlier Technical Agencies (ITU, UPU and ICAO)**

ITU and UPU were originally two early international organizations (Public International Unions - PIUs) which had existed in parallel with the League. Being staffed and headed by Swiss Nationals Swiss influence remained strong until well after the Second World War. Having resisted being part of the League system, they then changed their positions and joined the UN as

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<sup>57</sup> Author information given by Roger Piat, FAO Director of Personnel, (1973).

<sup>58</sup> Michele Alachevich, Ibid. p22.

new Specialized Agencies and started recruiting from a wider base. In 1946 Dennis Musk joined ITU from the Dollis Hill department of the British Post Office (Dollis Hill engineers had been instrumental in developing 'Colossus', the first computer which had been installed at Bletchley Park). Two years later Adrian David was recruited as a legal specialist and rose to become ITU's Legal Adviser and later Assistant to the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG) DG. Despite British significant contribution to postal history, very few Britons reached high-positions in UPU.

The only early UN agency in which UK nationals had little influence was the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) as it was very much a US and French-influenced agency. It existed, however, alongside an international non-governmental organization, the International Air Transport Agency (IATA). While Britain had no senior positions in ICAO, a British national William Hildred was appointed as IATA DG. Hildred is credited with aligning IATA's structure with the regional structure of ICAO and developing the technical and safety annexes of the Chicago Convention which had established ICAO in 1945.

#### **H. Subsequent Technical Agencies (WMO, IAEA and IMCO)**

WMO, although also originally a PIU, had a more international outlook from the start. Meteorology as a science was fostered and developed in the UK so it is not surprising, therefore, that in the International Meteorological Organization (the precursor to WMO) there was strong British influence and leadership. This continued into the post-war era with Arthur Davies, WMO DG from 1956-1979, becoming one of the longest-ever serving executive heads as well as the creator of the World Weather Watch programme. The continuing technological influence of the British Meteorological Office resulted in WMO appointing several Britons to senior posts, such as Oliver Ashford Chief of Research who was also involved in the World Weather Watch programme and Nelson King-Johnson, President of the WMO governing body from 1946-1951.

The IAEA, established in 1957, was the first UN agency to be based in Vienna. Its most senior staff came from either the USA or the USSR since both were heavily involved in the development of nuclear technology and weaponry. At least two of its programmes were run jointly with existing agencies. Henry Seligman was recruited from the British Atomic Energy Research Laboratory at Harwell to head the Research and Isotopes Section. There he was joined by Peter Witheringham who moved from WHO to FAO and then to the joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. Professor Abdus Salam, a Pakistani national, came from Imperial College, London, to head the joint IAEA/UNESCO centre for Theoretical Physics. Oliver Lloyd moved from FAO, where he had worked in the DG's office, to establish a technical assistance programme. David Smith, who became the Executive Secretary of the International Civil Service Commission, was originally a protocol officer at IAEA before he moved to UNDP as a Resident Representative.

The IMCO later to be re-named the International Maritime Organization (IMO), was headquartered in London from 1959. Colin Goad, a maritime specialist, moved from being the Ministry of Transport's Under Secretary, to becoming IMCO's DSG, and later its SG in 1968. His significant contribution was to focus the organization on the marine environment.

#### **I. Humanitarian Programmes (UNRWA, UNICEF and UNHCR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

UNRWA was created in 1949 and provides civil service support for the West Bank refugee communities and as such recruited staff with a wide variety of skills from the UK. Many UK citizens also transitioned to UNRWA from UNRRA. Joining UNRWA from the British colonial service John Rennie held the post of Deputy Commissioner-General in 1968 before he became

Commissioner-General in 1971. For the next six years he had the difficult task of holding the agency together not only during 1973 Middle East War but also the Lebanese Civil War which had involved evacuating UNRRA's headquarters from Lebanon to Vienna. The range of skills that supported UNRWA's work ranged from legal matters concerning refugees and drafting the rules and regulations for its 10,000 local staff (Michael Hardy and Burnell Vickers), quantity surveying (Peter Holdaway) and sanitation (Fred Christal). Two specialized agencies also contributed to the UNRWA mandate. UNESCO which took considerable responsibility for building the education infrastructure seconded Michael Townsend, a English Language specialist, to UNRWA while WHO provided medical and health support (see WHO above).

Two other UN bodies responsible for humanitarian issues, created about the same time as UNRWA, were the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1946 and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950. Both recruited from the UK in their early years. Early UNICEF staff members were John Saunders who after service in UNRRA, later transferred to UNDP (see above) and Alan McBain who became Chief of the Asia Desk. However, most UK nationals who worked for UNICEF joined in the 1970s and onward (see Part III). A similar picture emerges for UNHCR. Despite the UK providing its Executive Director (see above) the only other senior UK figure in UNHCR's early years was Bernard Alexander, Deputy Director for European Affairs.

One early achievement of the United Nations where the British do not appear to have contributed significantly was the successful drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which was adopted by the General Assembly in December 1948. This was spearheaded by Eleanor Roosevelt who chaired the Drafting Committee set by the Commission on Human Rights that ECOSOC had established at its first session in 1946. The main drafters were Rene Cassin (France), John Humphries (Canada), Charles Malik (Lebanon), P.C. Chang (China) and Hansa Mehta (India). The UK member was Charles Dukes (1881-1948). Dukes left school at the age of 11 and served time in prison during the First World War as a conscientious objector. Later on, he became a Labour MP, a senior trade unionist and a Governor of the Bank of England. In 1947, he was ennobled as Baron Dukeston.

While this review of British contributions dwells on staff, there were many UK nationals who supported international organizations as consultants. Jeffery Burley<sup>59</sup>, for example, after working for UNESCO during the period 1964-8 went on to work on field-level consultancy assignments for FAO, IBRD and the UN before working for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. Later he became President of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations. Herbert Stewart, who had been Agricultural Commissioner to the Government of India, headed a number of IBRD missions, Michael Kaser of ECE also consulted for UNDP, UNIDO, UNCTAD and UNICEF and David Drucker consulted for at least nine UN bodies.

This part of the study mainly deals with the twenty years from 1945-65 but starting at the end of the 1950s more Specialized Agencies arrived on the scene and their programmes and administrations benefitted from experienced staff moving across from already existing agencies. In fact, the 1960s saw many non-technical staff move between international organizations to bodies such as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (the six-monthly meeting of executive heads) which started developing common systems and approaches for the UN and its Specialized Agencies. An example of this is provided by Roger Barnes who rose within UNESCO to become Director of Personnel. Then, in 1971 he was appointed to the Secretariat

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<sup>59</sup> No relation to one of the authors.

of the Special Committee for the Review of the UN Salary System.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently he was appointed Executive Secretary of the Consultative Committee for Administrative Questions (CCAQ-PER) the interagency coordinating body responsible both for conforming administrative policies and for representing the combined administrations before the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

The UN designated the 1960s as the Development Decade. Several new agencies were created to support development activities, including UNCTAD in 1964, UNIDO in 1966 and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1967. WIPO was created out of two PIUs, based in Switzerland and France, which had joined together as the United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property. The Decade also saw a new influx of specialists and lower level recruits to work on field programmes and the impact of some of these new recruits within the UN system is covered in the next part of the paper.

### **Part III – Some concluding remarks on subsequent UK Staffing of the UN and the Agencies**

#### **A. Volunteerism**

Pre- and post-graduate volunteer assignments overseas had been a feature of British school-leavers' activities since 1958 when Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) was created by Alex Dickson. VSO activities later became the model for US President John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps. Although VSO is still active, it has ceased to be funded exclusively by the British Government and has widened its relevance by both moving closer to local development priorities (rather than the narrower teaching and UNDP support activities pursued earlier) and by expanding its recruitment pool to developing country nationals (in parallel with competition from the UN Volunteers Programme - UNV). Today approximately one-third of its funding comes from other partners.<sup>61</sup>

The text box in Part I recorded that David Owen in his 1966 address to Liverpool University mentioned that: "A small group of young Britons, most of them in their middle twenties, are now winning golden opinions for their splendid work as junior administrators, as part of a voluntary services scheme". This group of graduate volunteers was recruited between 1960 and 1975 for service with the UN through a joint programme run by VSO and the United Nations Association of the UK (UNA). Their two-year UNA/VSO appointments (as local staff in their country of assignment) were funded through grants to those two organizations by the British Government. As far as can be determined, between 50 and 70 UNA/VSO graduates served the UN system either in UNDP offices or with UNICEF and other agencies such as FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP). Why so many decided to volunteer in this way is not recorded, but a recent straw poll of some of them suggested that the death in service of Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961 inspired their interest in internationalism which coincided with the desire for students to take a "gap year" before starting employment.

While some returned to the UK after their assignments (often to development-related jobs or to academia), some 70% went on to serve within the UN system in a variety of functions. As hinted by David Owen they were well-placed for eventual successful careers and at least two of them reached ASG or USG levels at the UN. Around 20% of this intake went on to become senior managers running global programmes or equivalent and a similar percentage reached mid-

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<sup>60</sup> UN General Assembly Official Records 26<sup>th</sup> Session, Supplement 28 (A/8428) New York 1971

<sup>61</sup> VSO, *Focus for Change, VSO's Strategic Plan*, (London, 2002)

management levels some at regional or country levels. In the long-term, therefore, the British government obtained a substantial and often very practical input into international programmes for very little effort or expense.<sup>62</sup>

## B. Some British attitudes to staffing the UN

In 1966, Cambridge Opinion published the results of a survey of how British elites viewed the UN. The survey concluded that “British elites can hardly be described as enthusiastic, broadminded supporters of the UN. Rather they would like to see Britain operating on the world stage through the Commonwealth, and consider that Great Power conflicts are best handled by the Great Powers themselves”<sup>63</sup>.

A few years earlier Professor H.G. Nicholas in his *‘United Nations as a Political Institution’* concluded that ‘Looking over the whole record of British participation in the UN it is hard to throw off the feeling that for all its general commendability ... there has been something lacking in our showing there ...[there is] a curious reluctance in a power with world-wide responsibilities and great experience in international relations to make the most of the opportunities which the UN offers for forwarding the interests we have at heart’<sup>64</sup>.

These two quotes provide the background to show how in the early days the UK government approached the issue of staffing at the UN. It was a by-product of British attitudes to the UN and to the cause of multilateralism in general, resulting in the ambivalent attitude in British foreign policy to the UN as something to be suffered rather than something central to the pursuit of British interests. As a result, because of this policy of indifference, Britain had a stand-off policy towards British staff in the UN and the Specialized Agencies.. Certainly, in one sense – namely that of securing the independence of the international civil service - this was perhaps the right approach to take, although it is to be doubted whether that *desideratum* was the basis of British policy.

Alone among the permanent members of the Security Council (P5) the UK did not actively pursue political appointments for ‘their’ share of the quota of senior staff. Part of the reason for this was that, as noted earlier in Part II, the only British staff appointed to senior positions in the UN secretariat at the under- or assistant secretary-general level had all been ‘insiders.’ The initial senior appointment of David Owen had been part of the carve-up among the P5 of the senior secretariat positions (see Parts I and II, above). Thereafter, successive UN Secretaries-General had no need to look beyond the existing UK staff as they appointed Alexander MacFarquhar as USG head of UN Personnel, Martin Hill, as the ASG in charge of inter-agency affairs, Brian Urquhart as ASG and then USG for Special Political Affairs, John Shaw Rennie as UNRWA Commissioner-General, and then Sidney Dell, Margaret Anstee, John Saunders, Michael Priestley and Richard Jolly to ASG posts in UNDP or UNICEF.

The first such political appointment did not come until early 1986 when Brian Urquhart retired and the diplomat, Marrack Goulding, was nominated by the British government to succeed him. Goulding’s autobiography illustrates perfectly the inherent difficulties in political appointments;

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<sup>62</sup> Other young graduates joined the ODI Fellowship scheme and spent two years or so in government ministries (agriculture, finance, planning etc) in developing countries: some of them also went onto international careers.

<sup>63</sup> *Cambridge Opinion* 44, (John Burley, Ed) April 1966. The Survey, conducted by Dr. Mark Abrams, Director Research Services Ltd, covered about 2,500 university professors, civil servants, members of professions (such as medicine, law and architecture), company chairmen, authors, clergy, politicians, military officers, and landowners drawn from the 1963 edition of *Who’s Who*. The issue of *Cambridge Opinion* marked the UN’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

<sup>64</sup> Herbert Nicholas, *The United Nations as a Political Institution*, (London, 1961) p 177.

while he needed to be seen to be independent of Whitehall to gain credence and trust not only among his secretariat colleagues but also the Member States, he still needed to maintain close contacts with his former colleagues so as to be a reliable interpreter for the Secretary-General of the policies of a permanent member.<sup>65</sup>

Article 101 of the Charter states that ‘due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible’. As noted earlier, historical circumstances whereby British staff from the League transited to the UN and the agencies and ex-colonial British staff joined the multilateral system meant that throughout the early years there were a significant number of British nationals in the UN and the agencies. As a result, the British quota on those posts subject to geographical distribution was over-subscribed for all of the period covered by this paper.<sup>66</sup> The expansion of membership of the UN in the 1960’s following decolonisation, especially in Africa, inevitably and quite rightly expanded the number of countries anxious to secure posts in the secretariat. All these trends inevitably affected prospects for younger Britons desiring to pursue an international career. Other ways had to be found to facilitate the recruitment of British staff and the volunteer programme described above was one pathway.

The attitude of the British government to British UN staff was reflected in remarks made by a political appointee, Ivor Richard, a former labour politician, when he was UK Permanent Representative to the UN (1974-1979). Richard, early on in his assignment, asked to meet all the British staff then serving in the UN’s New York headquarters. His message was quite simple: whilst the British government appreciated the work they were doing, British UN staff should not expect his office to intervene, if the staff concerned were to seek such a course of action, in their favour with the secretariat. This of course was consistent with an unspoken but long-standing British policy on the matter. The reaction of staff – at least from those present – was perhaps predictable. Some applauded him for upholding the notion of independence of the ICS. Others said ‘other diplomatic missions protect and support their staff: we expect the same from you’. Thus, though it was an unorthodox statement from a senior staff member it nevertheless was appreciated by some.<sup>67</sup>

### **C. Other early British Staff contributions**

The 1970s saw a more rigid approach to recruitment of nationals, mostly in Headquarters and established offices, from the initial group of Member States based on a points system for key positions. More Member States were included in a wider recruitment process that naturally affected the status and chances of UK nationals wishing to pursue an international career. After 1980 the UN System had reached close to a ‘steady state’ and the opportunities for individuals to make unique intellectual contributions declined as a more cohesive and extensive bureaucracy took over in which individuals worked within team environments. Organizations, such as FAO and UNHCR which had a majority of staff working on field projects funded by third-party sources, continued to recruit British staff in good numbers, in some cases still from former colonial civil servants or from volunteers but fewer and fewer Britons were recruited to key policy positions. One however was Martin Barber who starting in the mid-1970s, worked on several humanitarian missions mostly at a key level, including service with UNHCR and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance where he pioneered UN mine-clearing

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<sup>65</sup> Marrack Goulding, *Peacemonger*, (London, 2002), p. 6

<sup>66</sup> See for example data for 1970: Staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, as at 31 August 1970 (By nationality and level), Annex Table 2, page 7, A/8156: Personnel Questions – Composition of the Secretariat, Report of the Secretary General, 12 November 1970.

<sup>67</sup> Personal reminiscences of one of the authors.

programmes. In addition, UK nationals continued to be successful with applications to IBRD and IMF, organizations with a less rigid application of national quotas reflecting a Member State's contribution to its budget where the UK was one of the highest contributors. One appointee to IMF was Andrew Crockett who was seconded from the Bank of England in 1972 to work on reform of the international monetary system. After returning to the Bank of England, Crockett then became General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements (the Central Banks' Bank) which he expanded in scope and size. At UNCTAD, Sidney Dell (see above) conceptualised the notion of interdependence among the international regimes for trade, money and finance. Alfred Maizels, who joined UNCTAD from the National Institute for Economic and Social Research, helped develop proposals to regulate the international commodity economy.

There were a number of high-profile appointments to the UN System, which paralleled the timing of the UNA/VSO programme. Dr Michael Irwin was, after field service in Bangladesh, appointed as UN Medical Director in which position he helped ICSC develop a system to recognize the impact of hardship postings in the field and later went on to hold a similar post at IBRD. Erik Jensen recruited as a UN social affairs officer and assistant to Martin Hill, later worked on special political matters in the field, such as in the Nigerian civil war, Pakistan and East Timor. He rose to be the SG's Special Representative for the Western Sahara and USG. Richard Jolly, Director of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University and a recognized historian of the UN system, became special adviser to the UNDP Administrator in 1996, then joined UNICEF as its Deputy Executive Director where he rose to become ASG.<sup>68</sup> William Ryrie a Treasury official who had worked for Alexander Cairncross, was appointed as first Chief Executive of the International Finance Corporation – the private-sector arm of IBRD.

Conditions of service in the UN system were first examined in detail by the Special Committee of the Review of the UN Salary System in 1971. An outcome of the Committee's report was the creation of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) in 1975. Arthur Hillis, another British Treasury official, was appointed to the Committee and became an original member of ICSC from 1975-1981. This period (when he worked closely with Commissioners Pascal Frochoux of Switzerland and Raul Quijano of Argentina) coincided with important steps forward to systematise human resources policies in the UN System and resulted in a uniform job classification structure, methodologies for salary surveys and incentives to attract staff to work in the most difficult (hardship) locations. After 1982, however, in line with an increasing British 'hands off' approach to the UN, no further ICSC Commissioners came from the UK, despite the potential to reform UN human resources policies through their interventions.

### **Text Box: The Associate Expert programme, a missed opportunity**

A programme that provided many young and well-qualified technical staff to the UN system was the Associate Expert Programme. Generally Associate Experts were well qualified having already taken and passed their Masters degrees. Although paid and treated as staff their costs were covered by the donor country, among which the UK was noticeably absent even though it could have provided an alternative and possibly more significant option to the UNA/VSO programme. Consequently, it often funded staff from Scandinavian or other Northern European countries. The impact of these well-qualified staff could be considerable. One such example was a Belgian, (Jan Beniest) who worked on an FAO marketing project in Kenya in the 1970s. He was a horticulturalist and one of his initiatives was to help a few Kenyan smallholders grow carnations, potentially for export. Once they were growing high-quality flowers he arranged for a series of trial refrigerated shipments to Holland, where the plants were sold commercially. These small steps were the first in an expanding production of flowers which have become a \$1 billion Kenyan export crop.

<sup>68</sup> L.





## Epilogue

In the introduction to this paper we expressed the desire that by focussing on the people involved in creating the UN system we would bring recognition of their achievements. In telling their story we hoped it would keep alive in Great Britain the spirit of internationalism that is ever more necessary for present generations as they confront the huge and complex problems of today's world. That objective was expressed even more succinctly by David Owen in his address to Liverpool University in 1966, referenced earlier. In it, Owen said:

“Now we have to exert ourselves in different ways, through new forms of organization, inspired by new loyalties. Already we have contributed as much as any nation to the concept of an international civil service since it was given its momentous send-off by those revolutionary figures Lord Balfour and Sir Eric Drummond, at the end of the First World War. Men like Arthur Salter, Harold Butler and Alexander Loveday played a distinguished rôle in establishing the high standards of the service in the inter-war years. In the early days of the United Nations system we contributed John Boyd Orr and Julian Huxley as the first Directors-General of FAO and UNESCO respectively; and at the International Bank William Iliffe not only served as a distinguished Vice President but also made history by his patient negotiation of the agreement between India and Pakistan on the waters of the Indus. In more recent years thousands of our fellow countrymen and women, some of the most effective among them graduates of this University have contributed their professional ability, vitality and devotion to this new way of serving a high ideal. ... May I submit that British support for the United Nations system, and continuing participation in the international civil service which sustains it, is a fine British tradition which will be well worth keeping up in the changing times that lie ahead.”

With resurgent nationalism appearing in the political classes we sincerely hope our expanded view of David Owens's perspective will, in a similar manner, continue to inspire future politicians not to 'self-isolate' but to support internationalism. After all, internationalism is fully consistent with national loyalty, as “the highest interests of one own's country are served best by the promotion of security and welfare everywhere”<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> (Earl of Perth, et al. (1944), *The International Secretariat of the Future*, p18).