Empire of the Mind: Subscription Libraries, Literacy & Acculturation in the Colonies of the British Empire

Sterling Joseph Coleman
EMPIRE OF THE MIND:
SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES, LITERACY & ACCULTURATION IN THE
COLONIES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .............................................................................................................v
List of Abbreviations .................................................................................................vii
Abstract ......................................................................................................................viii

INTRODUCTION .....................................................................................................1
1. SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY DOMINANCE (1780s-1929).................................15
2. INSTITUTIONAL SHIFTS IN THE METROPOLIS (1914-1945)......................53
3. SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY CO-OPATION (1929-1945) ..................................84
4. SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY AUTONOMY (1945-1962) ...................................125
5. EDUCATION, NATIONALISTS AND LIBRARIANSHIP ............................165
CONCLUSION ..........................................................................................................187
BIBLIOGRAPHY ......................................................................................................197
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .....................................................................................220
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Population for Penang in 1921 ..............30
Table 2. Sample Collection Size and Content of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica from 1900 to 1925 .................................................................46
Table 3. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Penang in 1931....85
Table 4. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Jamaica in 1943...85
Table 5. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for the Southern Provinces of Nigeria in 1931 ...............................................................................85
Table 6. Sample of Books Added to Penang Library Collection 1935 to 1939...........112
Table 7. Number of Volumes Issued by the Penang Library 1935 to 1939.............113
Table 8. Sample Collection Size and Content of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica from 1930 to 1940 .................................................................115
Table 9. Sample Collection Size and Content of the Lagos Library 1932 to 1934 ....117
Table 10. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Penang in 1947 .................................................................................................................126
Table 11. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Lagos in 1950 .................................................................................................................126
Table 12. Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Jamaica in 1960 .................................................................................................................126
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Action Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALA</td>
<td>American Library Association</td>
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<td>BITU</td>
<td>Bustamante Industrial Trade Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCNY</td>
<td>Carnegie Corporation of New York</td>
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<td>CDA 1929</td>
<td>Colonial Development Act 1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDAC</td>
<td>Colonial Development Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDWA 1940</td>
<td>Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDWA 1945</td>
<td>Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDWAC</td>
<td>Colonial Development and Welfare Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Colonial Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>Communist Party of Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUKT</td>
<td>Carnegie United Kingdom Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS</td>
<td>His (or Her) Majesty’s Ship</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLP</td>
<td>Jamaica Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMM</td>
<td><em>Kesatuan Melayu Muda</em> (Young Malay Union)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMS</td>
<td><em>Kesatuan Melayu Singapura</em> (Singapore Malay Union)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KORAG</td>
<td><em>Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft</em> (The Reich Colonial Society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Malaysian Chinese Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIC</td>
<td>Malayan Indian Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPAJA</td>
<td>Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCNC</td>
<td>National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNDP</td>
<td>Nigerians National Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Northern People’s Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYM</td>
<td>Nigerian Youth Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs</td>
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<td>OIE</td>
<td>Office of International Information and Educational Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSS</td>
<td>Office of Strategic Services</td>
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<td>OWI</td>
<td>Office of War Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>People’s National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
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<td>USIS</td>
<td>United States Information Service</td>
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ABSTRACT

In his ground-breaking *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson declared that the census, map and museum shaped the manner in which the colony imagined its dominion, the nature of the colonized, the geography of the colony and the ancestral right of the colonizer to rule.¹ The author’s analysis not only highlighted the impact of print-culture within a colonial setting but also created an opportunity to explore how other information gathering institutions may have contributed to the social and cultural development of both the metropolis and the colony. This dissertation is designed to build upon Anderson’s work through an analysis of the social and cultural roles subscription libraries played throughout the colonies of the British Empire.²

By analyzing British government documents, library annual reports and a variety of secondary sources, this study will assess the history, growth and development of subscription librarianship in the colonies of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria as a microcosm for British-controlled areas of the Caribbean, Asia and Africa respectively. This dissertation will argue that colonial subscription library development was a key component of “Neo-Macaulayism” which advocated the cultural enfranchisement and intellectual development of the indigenous elite to maintain a fully functioning colonial government bureaucracy against the threats of disloyalty and illiteracy.


² For the purpose of this study, the term ‘subscription library’ will be defined as follows: A type of library that developed in Britain during the second half of the 18th century, whose members paid annual dues or a subscription fee in exchange for the privilege of using library materials and services. And for the purpose of this study, the term ‘public library’ will be defined as follows: A library or library system that provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all the residents of a given community, district or geographic region, supported wholly or in part by public funds. Both definitions can be found in Joan M. Reitz, *ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science*, 2002. Online. Available from [http://vax.wesu.edu/library/odlis.html](http://vax.wesu.edu/library/odlis.html), Accessed May 3, 2008.
INTRODUCTION

In his ground-breaking *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson asserted, “the census, the map, and the museum…together they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.” 3 The author’s assessment of the role the census, the map and the museum played in colonialism not only highlighted the impact of print-culture within a colonial setting but also created an opportunity to explore how other information gathering institutions may have contributed to the social and cultural development of both the metropolis and the colony. This dissertation is designed to build upon Anderson’s work through an analysis of the social and cultural roles subscription libraries played throughout the colonies of the British Empire. 4

Prior to the late-1930s, colonial subscription libraries helped shape the colonizers view of the colonized through the creation of access restrictions primarily based upon income with race and ethnicity acting as secondary and tertiary limitations. Subscription libraries such as the Penang Library in Malaysia established in 1819, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica established in 1879 and the Lagos Library in Nigeria founded in 1932 routinely utilized the aforementioned restrictions to define not only who was the colonizer and who was the colonized but also who was a British citizen, who was a British subject and who among the British subjects were worthy of being British citizens.

With the reduction of subscription library membership fees during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century attempts were orchestrated by these institutions to appeal to the colonized elite for support. Membership in these subscription libraries served as status symbols for those members of the colonized elite who chose to claim them. However, the creation of the British Council in 1934 plus the advent of public libraries and reading rooms in the colonies of the British Empire from the late-1930s onward,

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4 For the purpose of this study, the term ‘subscription library’ will be defined as follows: A type of library that developed in Britain during the second half of the 18th century, whose members paid annual dues or a subscription fee in exchange for the privilege of using library materials and services. And for the purpose of this study, the term ‘public library’ will be defined as follows: A library or library system that provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all the residents of a given community, district or geographic region, supported wholly or in part by public funds. Both definitions can be found in Joan M. Reitz, *ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science*, 2002. Online. Available from [http://vax.wesu.edu/library/odlis.html](http://vax.wesu.edu/library/odlis.html). Accessed May 3, 2008.
revealed the utilization of these institutions as instruments by which ideas of Britishness could be conveyed to the colonized to ensure their loyalty during and after World War II. They also served as a social mute by weakening the tenor of growing public calls for subscription libraries to eliminate their access restrictions and become public libraries in their own right.

In the face of a rising tide of nationalist movements during the Cold War and the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of the 1940s, the British Council and some members of the colonizer elite attempted to shift the responsibility of maintaining these subscription libraries from the subscribers themselves to their local municipal governments. But whether these efforts proved to be successful or not was almost irrelevant because each of the aforementioned subscription libraries still maintained their fee-based operations well into the post-independence era. However, the question of how these subscription libraries were able to not only endure but also to define citizen and subject status in their respective colonial settings must be more clearly discerned.

The Historiography of British Colonial Librarianship

A critical aid in this process has been a retrospective examination of the contributions of other scholars on the topic of acculturation in a colonial setting. James C. Scott in his work *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* argued that a fundamental difference existed between acculturation in a print-culture setting under direct colonial rule and one under indirect colonial rule. “Indirect rule required only a minimal state apparatus but rested on local elites and communities who had an interest in withholding resources and knowledge from the center. Direct rule sparked widespread resistance and necessitated negotiations that

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5 For the purpose of this study, the term ‘reading room’ will be defined as follows: Also refers to a community facility administered independently of a library, equipped with tables, chairs and illumination but containing little or no reading matter, to which a person in need of a quiet retreat may bring his or her own materials for study, more common in less developed countries where comfortable space for individual study is at a premium. This definition can be found in Ibid. Available from [http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html](http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html).
often limited the center’s power; but for the first time, it allowed state officials direct knowledge of and access to a previously opaque society.’’

Bernard Cohen in his essay “The Command of Language and the Language of Command” argued that in the case of British India acculturation within a print-culture setting was achieved only through a British conquest of Indian knowledge that shaped defined, translated and quantified data to meet the information needs of the colonizer. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper in their essay, “Between Metropole and Colony” argued that acculturation within the print-culture setting of a colonial state constituted a fundamental quest for cultural balance. “In pursing a ‘civilizing mission’ designed to make colonized populations into disciplined agriculturalists or workers and obedient subjects of a bureaucratic state, colonial states opened up a discourse on the question of just how much ‘civilizing’ would promote their projects and what sorts of political consequences ‘too much civilizing’ would have in store.” However, as it directly pertains to this study, there are unanswered questions that must be addressed: What role did subscription libraries play in reflecting the way the metropolis imagined the colony, and the colonizer imagined the colonized? What role did subscription libraries play in the lives of their respective users within these colonial settings? How did subscription libraries contribute to the maintenance of Benedict Anderson’s grid of classification? How were subscription libraries utilized as instruments of acculturation to convey notions of Britishness to the colonized and the colonizer? And why were subscription libraries able to persist in the aftermath of the rise of public librarianship during the post-independence periods of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria? To effectively answer these questions, this dissertation will serve to complement and update the literature of the fields

8 Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper. “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda.” In Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 7. For the purposes of this study, the term ‘acculturation’ will be defined as follows: Cultural modification of an individual, group or people through prolonged and continuous interaction involving intercultural exchange and borrowing with a different culture. This definition can be found in Merriam-Webster. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary. (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1979), 8.
The historiography of acculturation is well developed within the Post-Modernist tradition starting with Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) which explored how the colonizer viewed the colonized within a given cultural stereotype both in a colonial and metropolitan setting. From this work, other studies more specific to this dissertation emerged such as Robert F. Arnove’s *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (1980) which assessed the role and function of philanthropic agencies such as the Ford Foundation in the dissemination of Western ideas throughout the developing world. Likewise, Ellen Condliffe Lagemann’s *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy and Public Policy* (1992) updated and centered Arnove’s pivotal work around the post-colonial impact of The Carnegie Corporation in its conveyance of Western ideas to the developing world. Finally, Susan L. Carruthers *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Government, the Media and the Colonial Counter-Insurgency, 1944-1960* (1995) performed a series of case studies which examined how British cultural and military imperialism was utilized to counter Fascist and Communist insurgencies throughout the colonies of the British Empire. Finally, Alistair Pennycook’s *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (1998) revealed how English as a language and English language instruction were utilized as part of the British Empire’s ‘divide-and-rule’ strategy throughout its African, Asian and West Indian colonies. This dissertation will attempt to complement these works by not only focusing upon subscription library development but also by re-examining the role philanthropic organizations such as the Carnegie Corporation and government agencies such as the British Council played in spreading Western ideals and Britishness respectively throughout the British Empire.

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The historiography on Jamaican librarianship is outdated and narrative in nature. One of the earliest works written on Jamaican librarianship was Frank Cundall’s “Library Work in Jamaica” (1898) which outlined the public and technical services of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica.14 After a significant scholarly drought, Mary A. Brebner in her article “The Libraries of the Institute of Jamaica” (1958) re-analyzed the history of the Institute of Jamaica to commemorate its sixtieth anniversary. Hazel Eloise Bennett in her Master of Science thesis “The Jamaica Library Service: Its Foundations and Development” (1966) was one of the first scholarly authors to explore Jamaican librarianship beyond the confines of the Institute of Jamaica.15 While two years later, E.L.V. Ifill followed Bennett’s timely analysis of the Jamaica Library Service with an holistic assessment of the history, growth and development of public librarianship throughout colonial and post-colonial Jamaica in his work “The Public Library Movement in Barbados and Jamaica: From the Middle of the 19th Century to the Present Day” (1968).16 However the most critical and recent analytical study of Jamaican librarianship can be found in Roderick Cave’s article “Early Circulating Libraries in Jamaica” (1980) which explored the social role and function of Jamaican subscription and circulating libraries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.17 With regards to the historiography of Jamaican librarianship, this dissertation will attempt to update and reassess a branch of library history which has been long neglected and integrate it into larger trends at work within the British Empire.

While a larger number of scholarly narratives were published for Malaysian librarianship than for Jamaican librarianship, the historiography of this field of study needs to be updated and reanalyzed. One of the first post-World War II assessments of Malaysian librarianship was published by L.M. Harrod “Libraries in Malaya and Singapore” (1956) which described the history, growth and development of librarianship in Malaysia as well as the impact of the Japanese occupation upon the colony’s libraries.

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during World War II. A few years later Wilfred J. Plumbe followed up Harrod’s work with an article “Libraries of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore Part 2” (1963) that served not only as a progress report of library development in the former British colonies but also as a critical assessment of academic and public libraries in Malaysia.

It was not until Edward Lim Huck Tee’s study *Libraries in West Malaysia and Singapore* (1970) was published that a nationalist narrative of the impact of British colonial rule upon Malaysian librarianship was conducted. In 1974 Donald E.K. Wijasuriya within his article “Public Library Development in Malaysia: A Brief Statement of Existing Conditions Together with a Research Proposal” re-analyzed Lim Huck Tee’s original assessment of Malaysian librarianship and offered a research proposal to study the feasibility of automating the nation’s public library services. One year later Lim Huck Tee united with Donald E.K. Wijasuriya and Radha Nadarajah to produce *The Barefoot Librarian: Library Developments in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to Malaysia* (1975) which updated and expanded Lim Huck Tee’s original findings to include the development of new regional institutes, and the computerization of public and academic library services throughout Southeast Asia. In this field of study, this dissertation will not only update the history, growth and development of Malaysian subscription libraries but also broaden the scope of the literature beyond its original isolated framework to include library development in other areas of the British Empire as part of a larger pattern of colonial library development.

The historiography of Nigerian librarianship was largely constructed around scholarly narratives founded upon an inductive pattern of analysis which expanded beyond the specific confines of its national borders and placed it within the greater whole of African librarianship. One of the earliest works to explore the origins of Nigerian public librarianship is Adekubi Adegoke’s article “The Evolution of Libraries in Nigeria”

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(1973) which traced library development in Nigeria from the creation of the first mosque libraries in northern Nigeria in the eleventh century to the Biafran War of the early 1970s.\(^\text{23}\) F.C. Ekpe in “The Colonial Situation and Library Development in Nigeria” (1979) assessed the impact of British colonial rule upon Nigerian librarianship and boldly examined the cultural and social benefits and losses patrons enjoyed and endured under colonialism.\(^\text{24}\)

Adolphe O. Amadi in *African Libraries: Western Tradition and Colonial Brainwashing* (1981) provided an assessment of British cultural imperialism and public librarianship for not only Nigeria but also for the whole of Anglophone and Francophone West Africa.\(^\text{25}\) Odo L. Nnaji within *The Library of Nigeria* (1986) refocused library development back onto Nigeria and examined the development of academic, public and special libraries during and after British colonial rule.\(^\text{26}\) Yet Anthony Olden within *Libraries in Africa: Pioneers, Policies, Problems* (1995) critically assessed the contributions of British, French and American library pioneers to the development of public libraries throughout Africa as well as Nigeria.\(^\text{27}\) Within this area of study, this dissertation will attempt to refocus the historiography of Nigerian librarianship squarely upon Nigeria yet include the colony within a broader analysis of a pattern of library development throughout the African, Asian and Caribbean colonies of the British Empire.

Because it has largely been written by its current and retired employees, the historiography of the British Council is heavily slanted towards an institutional history emphasizing its own role in library building and management activities. One of the earliest post-World War II assessments of The British Council was published by J.D.A. Adekunbi Adegoke. “The Evolution of Libraries in Nigeria.” *International Library Review* 5 no. 4 (1973): 407-452.


Odo L. Nnaji. *The Library in Nigeria*. (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1986). For the purpose of this study, the term ‘special library’ will be defined as follows: A library established and funded by a commercial firm, private association, government agency, nonprofit organization, or special interest group to meet the information needs of its employees, members, or staff in accordance with the organization’s mission and goals. The scope of the collection is usually limited to the interests of the host organization. This definition can be found in Joan M. Reitz, *ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science*, 2002. Online. Available from http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html. Accessed May 3, 2008.

Barnicot in his article “The Libraries of the British Council” (1951) which analyzed the roles and function of British Council libraries throughout the world on a region-by-region basis.\textsuperscript{28} One year later, Geoffrey Ashall Glaister in his article “A British Council Librarian Abroad” (1952) provided an autobiographical account of not only his exploits but also the progress the British Council made in combating illiteracy in the developing world.\textsuperscript{29} Three years later, Sir Ronald Forbes Adam in “British Council Libraries” (1955) provided a brief assessment of the public and technical services British Council libraries presented to their patrons throughout the developing world.\textsuperscript{30} However, Frances Donaldson in \textit{The British Council: The First Fifty Years} (1984) and Douglas Coombs in \textit{Spreading the Word: The Library Work of the British Council} (1988) both provided a comprehensive institutional history of British Council library operations throughout the British Empire and the world respectively.\textsuperscript{31} While these works were thorough in their assessment of the history of the British Council, they lack a critical and scholarly analysis of the British Council’s role, function and mission throughout the colonies of the British Empire. Much as James C. Scott in \textit{Seeing Like A State} examined the role of colonial government bureaucracies as quantifiers of indigenous knowledge, this dissertation will seek to analyze the British Council’s role as a metropolitan instrument of colonization designed to observe, shape and quantify the overall literacy of the colonial indigenous elite and masses.

Overall this dissertation will address four key shortcomings for the aforementioned historiographies. First, it will assess the extent to which the colonizer elite utilized subscription libraries to map and shape the cultural and social development of the colonized elite. In taking this step, my dissertation will argue subscription libraries were a socio-economic barrier whose utilization by the indigenous elite allowed the British to view them as British subjects worthy of British citizenship. Second, this study

will fill in the literature gaps and add an analytical perspective onto the historiography of Jamaican, Nigerian and Malaysian librarianship by re-examining primary and secondary sources, and exploring new questions related to the function that subscription librarianship served in these colonial societies. By engaging in this assessment, this dissertation will reveal a larger three period pattern of colonial subscription library development—sovereignty, co-optation and autonomy—which laid the foundation for modern librarianship in much of the Anglophone World.

Third, this study will attempt to provide a balanced yet critical assessment of the British Council’s activities in Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria as a microcosm for the rest of the developing world under British rule. By performing this study, this dissertation will serve as a model for future comparative analysis studies of British Council activities by scholars who are unaffiliated with the government agency. Fourth, this study will assess the place of the aforementioned subscription libraries in the lives of their respective users. While this topic has been long neglected within these historiographies, an attempt will be made to shed some light on not only how patrons and subscribers utilized these libraries but also on what these libraries meant to their respective users. As many studies have examined librarianship within some of the colonies of the British Empire, this dissertation will break new ground and contribute to the literature by providing the first comprehensive analysis of librarianship as a means of acculturation for the entire British Empire.

This dissertation will demonstrate that while subscription libraries were effectively utilized by the British during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to maintain a grid of classification through the imposition of access restrictions the primacy of membership was based upon income with race and ethnicity serving as secondary and tertiary considerations. This work will also argue that the rise and decline of colonial subscription librarianship occurred during three periods: subscription library dominance, subscription library co-optation and subscription library autonomy.

The Periods of Colonial Subscription Librarianship

The period of subscription library dominance began with the establishment of the first colonial subscription libraries in the 1780s and lasted until the passage of the
Colonial Development Act of 1929. During this period, the size of the colonized elite and the role it played in the colonial government bureaucracy was small but quickly growing. While the British metropolitan and colonial governments adopted a laissez-faire approach to the development of subscription libraries, these institutions enacted income-based access restrictions to financially survive and maintain their British-centric character. However, the colonies’ economic dependence upon agriculture and the reluctance of the colonial governments to financially support subscription libraries not only compelled these institutions to adjust most of their membership requirements but also forced the British metropolitan government to reassess the manner in which it culturally, socially and economically developed its colonies. This phase ended with the passage of the Colonial Development Act of 1929 which marked a turning point in British imperial policy away from a centuries-old laissez-faire approach in which the colonies were compelled to pay for their own development and more towards a “hands-on” policy of colonial economic, cultural and social development funded by the metropolitan government.

The period of subscription library co-optation lasted from the passage of the Colonial Development Act of 1929 until the British Council started its shift from a wartime propaganda agency into a peace-time cultural organization in 1945. During this phase, the size of the indigenous elite and the role it played in the colonial government bureaucracies grew to the point where the British had become dependent upon the colonized elite to maintain order and control over the colonies. Prior to World War II, the advent of Nazi propaganda highlighting the social and cultural shortcomings of British imperialism compelled the British metropolitan government to employ a series of counter-propaganda, colonial development and military measures to maintain the loyalty of the colonized elite and masses. During and after this global conflict, the rise of violent and non-violent nationalist movements such as the Communist Party in Malaysia, the People’s National Party in Jamaica and the Nigerian Youth Movement in Nigeria compelled the colonial governments—many of whose leaders sat upon the board of directors for their colony’s more prominent subscription libraries—to call upon these institutions to supply funding, personnel and materials to aid the development of emerging public libraries.
These institutions also served as an instrument within a larger campaign by the colonial governments to address the social and cultural needs of the indigenous masses and stave off calls for independence. The metropolitan government created the British Council, passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of the 1940s and implemented library surveys to re-tool the role and function of colonial public libraries and reading rooms towards the propagandizing of the British way of life in library collections and literacy campaigns. This phase also witnessed the dawn of the professionalization of colonial subscription and public librarianship with the addition of British librarians and the first, British-trained colonized librarians employed at these institutions. The period of subscription library co-optation ended with the beginning of the British Council’s shift from a war-time role to a peace-time function by 1945.

The period of subscription library autonomy began with the end of the British Council’s war-time propaganda role in 1945 and continued through the respective independence periods of the various colonies themselves. During this era, the size and role of the colonized elite within the colonial government had grown to the point of dominance and complete indispensability. In an effort to ameliorate growing independence movements within their respective colonies, the British metropolitan government, the colonial governments and the British Council launched indirect and direct appeals to the leadership of the indigenous elite to maintain their colony’s membership within the British Commonwealth in exchange for economic, social and cultural aid. However, these pleas were answered with mixed results.

Due to financial constraints and policy changes within the Colonial Office, the British Council also relinquished control over some of its Council libraries to colonial municipal governments who in turn added indigenous reading materials to the shelves of these newly-designated public libraries. In addition to Council libraries, subscription libraries were also offered to colonial municipal governments to be controlled and converted into public libraries. But the majority of these institutions maintained both their access restrictions and organizational autonomy well into the respective

32 For the purpose of this study, the term ‘literacy’ will be defined as follows: The ability to read or write with a minimal level of proficiency. Both of these definitions can be found in Joan M. Reitz, ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, 2002. Online. Available from http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html. Accessed May 3, 2008.
independence periods of the former colonies. These three periods of subscription library development established the framework through which library access and literacy passed from the hands of the colonizer to the colonized as the British Empire gave way to the British Commonwealth.

Finally, this dissertation will assert that subscription library development in the colonies of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria was designed to serve as cultural and social centers of Britishness for the British and indigenous elite. When the colonial government’s dependency upon the colonized elite became too great to ignore, the subscription libraries lowered income access restrictions in an effort to provide a largely politically disenfranchised indigenous elite with a cultural stake in a colonial system. Some members of the colonized elite accepted this exchange and even secured leadership positions at these subscription libraries. Other members of the British and indigenous elite challenged the value of these subscription libraries for the European non-elite and the indigenous masses. They also made public library development and mass literacy part of their agenda for social reform and political liberation before, during and after World War II. With the birth of public libraries in the colonies, subscription libraries provided financial, personnel and material aid to these new institutions to not only ensure their success but also to utilize them as social buffers to deflect calls for the conversion of subscription libraries themselves into public libraries. While public library development in the colonies of the British Empire did eventually serve as death knells for subscription libraries and their access restrictions; these institutions surprisingly continued to exist well into the post-independence period.

However, the subscription libraries in the aforementioned colonies as well as the factors which created and maintained their existence will be analyzed against the backdrop of subscription library development in Great Britain. The purpose of exploring metropolitan library development as a context for its colonial counterpart is to assess the impact of political, social and cultural events in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain upon colonial library development. By exploring the political and cultural origins of the British Council, a greater understanding of its mission and role throughout the British Empire will be achieved. By assessing the economic and political rationale behind the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of the 1940s, a correlation will be
explored between the intent of these laws and their actual impact upon the economic, social and cultural development of the colonies where they were implemented. And by analyzing the history and development of subscription libraries in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain, social and cultural parallels and discontinuities will be analyzed with colonial subscription libraries. Overall, the metropolitan context for colonial development will provide a firm foundation for the study of library development in the colonies of the British Empire.

**Primary and Secondary Sources**

Seven different types of primary sources will be used to produce this dissertation: travel accounts, library reports, newspapers, British Council archival records, acts of the British Parliament, colonial census records and Unesco field reports. Travel accounts by British and foreign observers will be used to provide a snapshot of the status and services of subscription libraries—or lack thereof—in the case study colonies. Library reports are an invaluable resource which will be utilized to determine the collection size, collection content, public and technical services of the colonial subscription libraries. Newspapers will be employed to gain access to both articles and editorials written by library patrons and librarians about subscription libraries in their localities. British archival records will provide information about the origins, activities and rationale of the British Council’s public library building activities throughout the colonies. The acts of the British Parliament will reveal the extent to which the metropolis contributed to both colonial and library development during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Colonial census records will be tapped to ascertain the level of literacy which existed within the case study colonies and measure the extent to which subscription libraries advanced or failed to combat illiteracy throughout the colonizer and colonized populations. Finally, the Unesco field reports will be utilized to measure the impact of the British Council’s public library and reading room building activities upon illiteracy within the aforementioned colonies on the eve of their respective independences.

These primary sources should provide this dissertation with the raw data and information needed to analyze the impact of subscription libraries upon acculturation within their respective colonies. They also will allow this dissertation to argue that
colonial subscription library development was a key component of “Neo-Macaulayism” which advocated the cultural enfranchisement and intellectual development of the indigenous elite to maintain a fully functioning colonial government bureaucracy against the threats of disloyalty and illiteracy. However, the initial period of this process of library development within the colonies of the British Empire must be explored—the period of subscription library dominance.
CHAPTER 1

SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY DOMINANCE (1780s-1929)

The first colonial subscription libraries were established in the 1780s and were the dominant form of librarianship in the British Empire until the passage of the Colonial Development Act of 1929 by the British Parliament. The colonies examined within this study entered this period through conquest or purchase from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Jamaica was conquered in 1655 when Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables after an unsuccessful attack on the Spanish colony of Saint Domingo seized its sister colony of Jamaica. Malaysia was acquired in 1786 when the island of Penang, formerly part of the State of Kedah, was ceded to Captain Francis Light of the British East India Company by the Sultan of Kedah in exchange for protection from his rivals in neighboring states. Nigeria was obtained with the British annexing the city of Lagos as a crown colony in the aftermath of militarily settling a succession dispute between King Kosoko and Prince Akitoye both of the Yoruba tribe.

As much as conquest, purchases and treaties defined this period, the establishment and maintenance of colonies was also defined by the British metropolitan and colonial governments’ lack of appreciation for indigenous cultural institutions. This cultural unappreciation was largely manifested through the British metropolitan policy of indirect rule. This policy permitted the British to establish an overseas empire through the proxy rule of indigenous leaders or self-governing colonizer elites. For example, Jamaica possessed a governorship that represented the interests of the Crown, yet a colonizer elite of planters and merchants still enjoyed limited self-rule from 1656 to 1866. In Malaysia, colonizer self-rule was established through the British East India Company which created the island of Penang as the fourth Presidency of India in 1805. Self-rule lasted until 1867 when Penang along with the rest of the Straits Settlements—Perai, Dindings, Malacca and Singapore—were incorporated as a crown colony of the British Empire. For

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Nigeria, Governor Sir Frederick Lugard established and maintained indirect rule through the Hausa emirs of northern Nigeria and the Yoruba kings of southern Nigeria until the two regions were incorporated as a single crown colony in 1914.

An exception to this agenda existed in eighteenth and nineteenth century India. There officials and officers of the British East India Company staged many successful and unsuccessful attempts to study, read and speak the political languages of India—Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. The products of their labor were textbooks, dictionaries and translations which helped them to achieve mastery over these languages. These attempts at linguistic mastery were not conducted out of intellectual curiosity or out of an appreciation for ancient languages which predated their own. The gathering and mastery of this knowledge was orchestrated by the British East India Company to facilitate and secure their rule over India.

This information was needed to create or locate cheap and effective means to assess and collect taxes, and maintain law and order; and it served as a way to identify and classify groups within Indian society…The vast social world that was India had to be classified, categorized, and bounded before it could be ordered.37

For the British East India Company the investment of time, money and labor that was placed into mastering these languages was a means to mastering India’s political, social and cultural life. In other colonies, the lack of appreciation for indigenous cultural institutions was specifically geared towards the establishment of indirect rule which required of the British a minimal expenditure of political, cultural, social, economic and military capital to maintain their control over a given territory.

With regards to the development of librarianship, this policy of indirect rule encouraged metropolitan and colonial government non-interference. In northern Nigeria, mosque libraries dotted the landscape long before their region was incorporated into the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. These libraries were supported by awqaf. “Basically a pious endowment whose intended beneficiary was the Muslim community at large, the system of waqf...was extensively used by Muslims to provide for the enrichment and

upkeep of their various social institutions including mosques and their libraries.”  

Yet it must be noted that when the British first consolidated their control over Northern Nigeria in 1900 no attempt was made to either obstruct or tax or eliminate the *awqaf*, mosques and libraries contained within them. Indirect rule emphasized stability, peace and order over direct political control. British metropolitan and colonial governments viewed any disruption of these indigenous cultural institutions to be a threat to that policy and thought best that they should be ignored.

The British metropolitan and colonial governments were also unwilling to meet the library needs of the European non-elite and the indigenous masses in this period. As Linda Colley noted in her study on the origins of British nationalism, *Britons*, prior to the Seven Years War (1756-1763) the predominantly Protestant British Empire was undersized, undermanned, and underdeveloped compared to the European and Catholic French and Spanish Empires.  

These conditions contributed to a laissez-faire policy of colonial development.

The government certainly had no money to spare to help the colonies, and this introduced the general rule that English colonies had to cover their own costs, both in the sense that the government of a colony had to raise enough revenue to pay its own bills and in the sense that there were no subsidies to encourage people to stay in a colony where they could not earn their own living.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this laissez-faire policy of colonial development underwent some minor modifications but was largely kept intact. The British metropolitan government suffered its colonies to float loans if they were credit worthy but saw little reason to provide them with grants-in-aid.  

The strongest manifestation of this policy was in the field of education.

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38 It must be denoted that *awqaf* is the plural form of the term *waqf* which is located in Mohamed Makki Sibai, *Mosque Libraries: An Historical Study*. London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987, 92.


41 Ibid, 308.
The Nature of Colonial Education

From the eighteenth to the late-nineteenth centuries, the educational systems of the British colonies were largely controlled by Protestant and Catholic missionary societies. Whether the colony was under direct or indirect rule, these religious groups established primary and secondary schools which provided Christian-oriented rote instruction which inculcated English, religion and mathematics to the children of the indigenous masses and European non-elite. With the exception of the colony of Jamaica, these institutions coexisted with Islamic schools in the predominantly Muslim areas of northern Nigeria and rural Malaysia as well as with private Chinese, Malay and Tamil vernacular schools in the urban centers of Malaysia. For example, though Islamic schools dominated the whole of northern Nigeria, the Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Mission established a joint college near Lagos in southern Nigeria. In Malaysia the Roman Catholic Order of the Christian Brothers founded St. Xavier’s Institute in 1852, while the first Malay vernacular schools were established in 1878. The first Tamil vernacular schools were founded in 1895 and the first Chinese vernacular schools were established as late as 1911.

The British metropolitan and colonial governments relegated primary and secondary education to the missionary societies because “Colonial officials were acutely aware that the spread of schooling could be ruinously expensive if social demand was allowed to grow unchecked….Colonial governments provided aid but the initiative remained with the missions to start schools and maintain them in the first place.”

Due to a policy of laissez-faire colonial development which compelled each colony to finance its social services through its own revenues, the development of primary and secondary education was uneven from one colony to another. This policy further contributed to the uneven development of vocational education when the British colonial governments

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formally assumed control of their education systems during the late-nineteenth and early-twentienth centuries.

The development of vocational education in the British colonies was established along two distinct tracts: agricultural training and technical training. Agricultural training offered a curriculum specifically geared towards instructing agriculturalists, farmers and agricultural agents on the latest agricultural techniques and technological innovations to increase, maintain and protect their cash crop yields. Such facilities as the Federal Department of the Agricultural Research Institute, Ibadan which was founded in Nigeria in 1899, the Jamaican School of Agriculture which was established in 1910 and The Rubber Research Institute of Malaya which was organized in 1925 to name three among several were operated by the colonial governments and staffed by British expatriates who served as instructors. 44

Technical training in the colonies centered on a curriculum designed to establish a cadre of professionals and skilled craftsmen—civil servants, carpenters, doctors, roofers, lawyers, welders, teachers, mechanics, etc.—who would perform most of the labor-intensive and clerical tasks which were required. Similar to the agricultural schools, these institutions were operated by the respective colonial governments who at first hired British expatriates to staff these facilities yet during the twentieth century permitted graduates to serve as instructors as well. The best examples of these facilities were the Shortwood Training College for Women Teachers in Kingston, Jamaica founded in 1885, the Penang Free School which provided instruction on accountancy and bookkeeping established in Georgetown, Malaysia in 1902, and the Yaba Medical Research Institute established in Lagos, Nigeria in 1909 among several others. 45


The extension of this laissez-faire policy of colonial development into library development manifested itself in the willful neglect of the library needs of the European non-elite and the free people of color in one of the British Empire’s earliest colonies—Jamaica.

**The History of Jamaican Librarianship (1780-1879)**

Before and after the abolition of slavery in 1834, Jamaican subscription libraries were created by stationers, book clubs and literary societies; funded and maintained through the charging of subscription fees yet devoid of any financial support from the colonial government. This complete dependence upon subscription fees encouraged many of these libraries to fold when their membership went into arrears. One of the earliest examples of such a failure can be found in 1780. William Aikman, the owner of a Kingston circulating library, advertised the liquidation of his library and the auctioning off of its collection because the fees he collected were insufficient to cover the shipping costs of new books from London.46

Another contributing factor to the life and death of subscription libraries in Jamaica was the nature of the Jamaican economy itself. “Jamaica’s society was a plantation economy based on sugar and coffee which produced difficulties for the merchant, which affected the bookseller and circulating library proprietor as severely as other tradesman. Quite apart from the chronic shortage of coin in the island, the nature of the planting business demanded that merchants should give long credit.”47 When circulating libraries issued long credit, depending upon the condition of the sugar crop, they sometimes found themselves in arrears and under heavy debt when planters, their families, government officials, and other tradesmen were unable to pay their subscription fees in full. Without the subscription fees to support the library, it would face one of two fates: dissolution and dispersion of its collection through a public sale or auction or consolidation of the subscription library within another literary society or book club.

An example of this consolidation can be found in the fate of The Jamaica Society which was created in 1825 and disbanded in 1849. The Colonial Literary and Reading

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Society immediately took its place and its collection. “Twelve years later, in 1861, this society was still functioning with 167 members, but later in the decade decline set in. In 1868 its quarters were taken over by the newly-formed Kingston Literary and Reading Society, which had many of the officers from the Colonial Literary and Reading Society on its board of management.”

The lack of colonial government support doomed subscription librarianship in Jamaica to a cycle of birth, life and death that could have been as long as a decade or as short as a year.

The British elite also wanted to create subscription libraries to satisfy their information needs, to entertain themselves and to keep up with current events throughout the colony, the British Empire and the world. These institutions through their high subscription fees not only excluded the indigenous masses but also the colonizers of the lower and middle classes. In Malaysia the membership of the Penang Library—originally called The Prince of Wales Library—in 1817 were required to pay an extremely high subscription fee of M$48.00 per year with an entrance fee of M$25.00. While these fees were designed to serve as a socio-economic barrier, they also were structured to meet the purchasing, shipping and maintenance costs incurred by a subscription library whose membership knew that it could not depend upon the metropolitan or colonial government for financial support. These major trends, the unwillingness of the British to address the library needs of those whom they colonized, and their desire to create subscription libraries for the purposes of a narrow colonial elite can be seen in the life of the earliest of the three under study—The Penang Library in Malaysia.

The History of the Penang Library (1817-1880)

Much as the London Library in the British metropolis would be founded by the British historian Thomas Carlyle in 1841 with some of the literary and artistic figures of the London social scene, the Penang Library in the British colony of Malaysia was

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49 Edward Lim Huck Tee, *Libraries in West Malaysia and Singapore.* Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Library, 1970, 47. The author extracted this information from Penang Library, *Annual Report, 1945*, 2. It must be noted that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the British colony of Malaysia the Malaysian dollar (M$) served as the official unit of currency.
established in 1817 by the British East India Company paymaster and Civil Store keeper, Robert Ibbetson and some of the more prominent members of the colonizer elite such as the future Governor of the Straits Settlements Kenneth Murchison, the British East India Company military officer Captain A.T. Kerr, the British East India Company postmaster Major J.M. Coombs, and the wealthy British nutmeg merchant, David Brown.\textsuperscript{50} The library was designed to achieve three goals: to provide recreational reading materials to the upper echelon of the European community, to establish a collection of Malaysian and Eastern manuscripts, and to display art and nature specimens from not only Malaysia but also from other countries and colonies in the surrounding region.\textsuperscript{51} However, one year after its founding a series of rule changes were implemented to raise the library’s revenue and the exclusiveness of its membership. After 1 January 1818 the library refused to admit any new subscribers unless a candidate was nominated by three subscribers and voted upon by the membership. If the applicant received less than two-thirds of the vote his application was rejected. The following year on 8 October 1819 the library required that all subscriptions be paid three months in advance, and a year later on 25 September 1820 the rule was further amended so that subscriptions had to be paid eight months in advance, within two days after their being due, on pain of a forfeiture of membership.\textsuperscript{52}

Two possible reasons for this financial hardship could lie in the economic impact of the British seizure of the Dutch colonies in Java in 1811 and the British establishment of Singapore in 1819. The former allowed British traders easier access to the Spice Islands and the main centers of trade in Southeast Asia than Penang’s location could provide. The latter diverted British trade from Penang to Malacca and brought a measure of economic prosperity to that other region at the expense of Penang. Though Penang had proved useful to the British during the French Revolutionary War, the sudden diversion of trade in such a short span of time may have compelled the more prosperous


members of the Penang Library to move on and thus bring to the library financial hardship.\(^{53}\)

Despite these economic setbacks, the Penang Library was able to maintain its financial independence and may have taken steps to move to a larger facility. The editor of *The Penang Argus and Mercantile Advertiser* observed, “It is rumored that the Penang Public Library is to be removed from its present most uncomfortable location—a cellar underneath the government office—to the building formerly used as a Scotch church, in the Wortham Road. We only hope that rumor is correct.”\(^{54}\) While the rumor proved to be unfounded, the Penang Library continued its existence as an independent subscription library until 1880. Before one proceeds to examine the events which robbed the Penang Library of its independence, one must explore the origins of subscription libraries as a whole in the British metropolis.

**The Origins of Subscription Librarianship in the Metropolis**

One year before the death of King George I in 1727, the earliest subscription library that was known to exist was attributed to Allan Ramsay who operated the library out of his shop in Luckenbooths in Edinburgh, Scotland.\(^{55}\) Yet one of the most durable subscription libraries in eighteenth century England which could have served as a model for colonial subscription librarianship was the Bradford Library and Literary Society.

Founded in 1774 in the town of Bradford to the west of Leeds, this subscription library catered to the elite within the local community much as the Penang Library did in the city of Georgetown. With a membership that included merchants, manufacturers, clergy and professionals, the Bradford Library and Literary Society charged an exorbitant set of fees through a shareholder system. Initially starting with seventy-two shares sold at a guinea each in 1775, “each share entitled its owner and the members of his family living under the same roof to use the library. The price of these shares rose rapidly during the French Wars and by 1824 cost £5…In addition to buying a share, members

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\(^{54}\) *The Penang Argus and Mercantile Advertiser* (Georgetown), 21 October 1868.

had to pay an annual subscription (5s. at first, rising to one guinea in 1824).” These high fees may have also been responsible for the slow growth of the library’s membership: in 1796 the Bradford Library and Literary Society had 118 members, by 1840 it had 142 members and by 1853 it only had 194 members. The content of its collection was slanted towards history, travel and biography with politics, economics and philosophy serving as the second largest section of the collection and fiction as the third largest.  

Until it found its permanent home in a dispensary building on Darley Street in 1854, the Bradford Library and Literary Society was stationed in the home of each honorary librarian who was hired to maintain it. On the eve of the passage of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, the Bradford Library and Literary Society was one among four different kinds of subscription libraries in the British metropolis. The other kinds of subscription libraries were proprietary libraries such as the aforementioned London Library, book clubs such as the Sheffield Book Society founded in 1806, mechanics’ institutes such as the Mechanics’ Apprentice Library in Liverpool founded in 1823 and circulating libraries such as Mundie’s Select Library in London founded in 1842.

However these subscription libraries were competing against each other and other institutions for the patronage of the British reading public. In England alone it is estimated that between 1700 and 1799, 274 subscription libraries were in operation yet by 1850 no more than 105 still existed. The reason for this high level of attrition resided in the fact that “the fashion of creating subscription libraries faded as literary and scientific institutions and mechanics’ institutes, with libraries of their own in addition to other facilities, began to appear in increasingly large numbers.” After 1850 the creation of free public libraries in the British metropolis only accelerated this process.

57 Ibid, 217.
Because of two provisions within the Public Libraries Act of 1850 which limited the law’s operation to boroughs exceeding 10,000 and subjected public library approval to a ratepayer vote, public library development did not immediately bring about the end of these subscription libraries but triggered a decades-long war between those who favored public library development and those who opposed it.\textsuperscript{60} Landlords, shopkeepers, publicans, booksellers and proprietors of circulating libraries were the vanguard of public library opposition. The British library historian, Thomas Kelly, also noted, “In Newcastle upon Tyne, where a motion for adoption was first passed at a public meeting in 1872, every conceivable manoeuvre was used to harass and delay the progress of the work, and it was not until 1880 that a temporary lending library was at last opened.”\textsuperscript{61}

In spite of this kind of widespread resistance to the founding of public libraries, the dawn of the twentieth century brought with it a continued steady decline in subscription library operation from 105 in 1850 to 44 in 1900. However, the rise in the number of public libraries cannot be solely to blame for the disappearance of some subscription libraries as the financial troubles of the London Library can attest.

At its following annual general meeting, held on 29 May 1890, its total book-stocks were put at 117,000 volumes, but its annual issue was under £6,000. It had just failed in its attempt to avoid payment of household local rates, on the grounds that it was a business with ‘its trade in the lending books.’ The Judge to whom it had appealed, rejected its application on the grounds that the premises contained a residential flat for its curator, and this was a household within the meaning of the law. So it had to pay local rates of 9d.on the pound, on an assessment of £600. So it faced a payment of rising costs and largely stationary revenue.\textsuperscript{62}

The bad legal turn the London Library endured in 1890 was hardly comparable to the strides public library development was making during this time. In spite of the fact that by 1900 at least 319 public libraries had come into existence since the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, the Bradford Library and Literary Society was confident

\textsuperscript{60} Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 3$^{rd}$ ser., vol. CX (1850), col. 155.


that it could survive this onslaught. "But we in Bradford may comfort ourselves with the assurance that for us at any rate the vanishing period has not yet arrived. Though we have long since celebrated the centenary of our foundation, we are still flourishing, and, so far as we can forecast the future, likely to flourish."  

By the end of World War I, the Bradford Library and Literary Society may have had cause to worry because the Public Libraries Act of 1919 and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust (CUKT) provided the legal and financial framework for public library development in the rural areas of Britain. The Public Libraries Act of 1919 permitted any county council in England or Wales to adopt the Public Libraries Act for a whole or part of the county, it allowed education committees in the counties to adopt the Public Libraries Act and repealed the penny rate provision of the Public Libraries Act of 1850 in favor of local rates according to the need of the county council or education committee.  

From 1850 to 1919, only thirteen English rural counties operated public libraries and did so only through charitable donations. From 1919 to 1931, forty-four English rural counties adopted the Public Libraries Act of 1919 and constructed public libraries in their communities. Though the British Parliament allowed rural public library development in England to become a legal possibility, Andrew Carnegie made it a financial possibility.  

Prior to the creation of the CUKT in 1913, the Scottish steel magnate and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie "had expended a sum of £1,770,000 for the building of Public Free Libraries supported by rate-aid by Local Authorities which adopted the Library Acts." Once the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust was established with Sir John Ross, an old friend, counselor and solicitor of Andrew Carnegie, as its chairman the CUKT promised additional grants in the amount of £174,970 for the construction of new library buildings and reached an overall expenditure total of nearly £2,000,000 for the erection of Public Libraries throughout the United Kingdom.  

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64 United Kingdom. The Law Reports. An Act to amend the Public Libraries Acts, 1892 to 1901, and to repeal so much of the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891, as authorizes the provision of Museums in England and Wales. 9 & 10 Geo. 5, ch. 93.
67 Ibid, 9.
formalized the distribution of donations to handle the increasing number of requests from English municipalities, increased financial outlays to satisfy this rising demand and funded library and non-library related building projects on a need-only basis.

As previously mentioned from 1913 to 1919 CUKT sought to provide grants for the construction of library buildings in thirteen English rural counties. With the passage of the Public Libraries Act of 1919 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust accelerated its benefactions and helped spur public library growth throughout English rural counties. “£192,000 was set aside by the Carnegie Trustees to be granted to counties adopting the Acts and starting rural library schemes during the years 1920-5. Supplementary grants for book purchase amounting to £90,000 were distributed during 1926-30, to counties which were developing along approved lines.”

Thus the Public Libraries Act of 1919 and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust put further pressure on subscription libraries to survive and contributed to their overall decline through the spread of free public library alternatives to their subscription-based services. But while competition and free public libraries were decimating the ranks of subscription libraries throughout the British metropolis, the Penang Library confronted financial problems of a different sort that warranted colonial government intervention.

**Problems in Penang (1880-1929)**

By the late nineteenth century, the Penang Library was forced to address two pressing problems. The first problem was the indebtedness of the library itself. While the exact amount of the debt is unknown, what is known is the Penang Library in 1880 sacrificed its long held financial independence when it approached the Straits Settlements government for a grant of M$1,500. This grant was provided on two conditions: Two government officials would serve on the Penang Library Committee of Management in an attempt to craft new management rules, reorganize the library and account for the spending of the grant. The second condition was the Penang Library would create and maintain a reading room that would be free and available to the public. The Penang Library agreed to these terms and from 1880 until 1898 received an annual grant of M$1,500. In 1899 this sum was raised to M$2,000. A few years before the Japanese

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occupation of Malaysia during World War II, this annual grant was further increased to M$4,000. As a visitor to the island of Penang in 1907, H.A. Cartwright wrote of the library, “That this institution is being conducted on sound financial lines is testified by the fact that its total income in 1906, including 3,021 dollars brought forward from the previous year, was 7,344 dollars, compared with an expenditure of 5,443 dollars.”

Though the Penang Library achieved financial solvency at this point, its agreement with the Straits Settlements government ended the library’s financial and operational independence. While the appointment of government officials to the library’s management committee allowed it to monitor the spending of its grants, the pressing problem of meeting the literacy needs of its growing indigenous elite only was beginning to be addressed. The root of these unsatisfied needs resided within the parochial and secular educational systems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Prior to 1880, elementary, secondary and vocational education in Malaysia was the joint responsibility of Christian missionary groups, Islamic schools and the colonial government. The Chinese, Indian and Malay populations were taught reading, writing and arithmetic with the learning of English as an optional course of study. Upon graduating from vocational schools, most educated Chinese, Indians and Malays were encouraged to serve within the colonial bureaucracy. A key drawback to this encouragement was the drive by many members of the indigenous elite to adopt reading habits that only satisfied their desire to pass the civil service examination. Once this test was passed, there was very little impetus for the colonized elite to develop reading habits beyond what was necessary for their positions. The Straits Observer noted this fact and pushed for radical educational changes, “For the few, who may soar there from, more generous and judiciously controlled state aid to the private or quasi-public schools; more government scholarships; and, shall we say it, a state-aided university of some sort should be provided, whole real knowledge should be taught and not chiefly an acquaintance with dead tongues.”

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71 The Straits Observer (Singapore) 6 July 1897.
Through the provision of a free public reading room, the Straits Settlements government may have believed the Penang Library could awaken within the indigenous elite a desire for knowledge beyond what was needed to pass the civil service examination and to meet the intellectual needs that such a successful awakening would elicit. While no one could compel a member of the colonized elite to use this reading room against his or her will, the colonial government may have wanted the reading room to exist as a clear opportunity for those whom it employed to develop good reading habits, enhance their minds and better serve the Straits Settlements government. However, this policy was not without its limitations as *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* reported,

Seven junior clerks in the government service presented themselves before a board of examiners…on Wednesday for examination in order to qualify themselves for promotion to the senior grade. Of these only one, a Malay clerk employed in the prison, passed. The remainder, all Eurasians, failed. We are told that it was painfully evident to the examiners that the candidates had not taken any pains to render themselves eligible. When asked what books they had read, one of them answered that he had perused “The Arabian Nights”; another, “The Lives of Saints and Martyrs”; while a third proudly stated he has mastered “Aesop’s Fables”…[These] are very good works in their way…But the fact of a young man knowing all the works cited by heart, will not…qualify him for a post in one of the higher grades of the civil service, or any other service short of that of a sacristan…The very shortcomings of these lads is evidence of the fact that their school education is not sufficient to awaken in them that thirst for knowledge so desirable, so very essential for their well-being in after life.72

Because they had become so dependent upon the indigenous elite to operate their bureaucracy, the Straits Settlement government could no longer afford to ignore the educational welfare of its employees. An example of this dependency can be found in the

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72 *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* (Georgetown), 14 August 1889.
1921 census records for Penang. A sample of three reading-intensive occupations—clerks, teachers and lawyers—was taken for the island of Penang. The results are:

<table>
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<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Malays</th>
<th>Other Malaysians</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Eurasians</th>
<th>Other Communities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>629</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5150</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>1018</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6189</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reveals that the colonizer elite of the Straits Settlements government were becoming dependent upon the colonized elite to serve as clerks and teachers in Penang. Lawyers were the sole exception to this rule as Europeans outnumbered all other population groups other than the Chinese. This level of dependency also served as an impetus for the colonial governments critics to address these problems and challenge the colonial government to do the same. *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* declared, “It is only by teaching them English that the natives of this colony can be made useful to themselves and to the government. A great many appointments which are now beyond their reach and which the government are compelled to fill up with people from outside the colony would fall to the natives if they but learn the English language well.”*The Straits Observer* noted, “The clerical life has been too apt to become the arm of the…Straits youth of all nationalities…Therefore education, if truly considered, shall be directed to improving and developing each special form of labour, rather than lifting the

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73 The final count for the occupation of clerks also includes typists and stenographers while the final count for the occupation of lawyers includes judges and magistrates. The data in Table 1: Reading-Intensive Occupations by Population for Penang in 1921 was compiled from J.E. Nathan, *The Census of British Malaya (The Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Protected States of Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu and Brunei 1921)*. London: Waterlow & Sons Limited, 1922, 489-518. It must be denoted that the population tabulation for lawyers includes judges and magistrates while the population tabulation for clerks includes typists and stenographers.

74 *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* (Georgetown) 10 January 1891.
individual out of one stratum of work and setting him down in another.” And as late as 1929, The Eastern Courier observed,

Although the parents of one of Mr. Shaw’s old pupils might not have entertained any higher ambition than that their son should be a chief clerk on some government office, as a very natural result of the enlightenment which MR., [sic] Shaw has been instrumental in giving that chief clerk he is now desirous that his son should aspire to something higher, such an aspiration cannot be satisfied by lowering the standard of education but by raising it.

And this was the problem the Penang Library was called upon to help solve when it surrendered it financial and managerial independence to the Straits Settlements government in the closing years of the period of subscription library dominance.

The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica (1879-1929)

Unlike the Penang Library which was specifically designed to cater to the information and entertainment needs of the British elite, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica may have owed its existence to the racial and social problems of nineteenth-century Jamaica. Of the three subscription libraries explored in this study, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was the only one mandated by colonial law.

On 7 May 1879 the Legislative Council and Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave enacted the Institute of Jamaica Law of 1879 which created a Board of Governors “to promote the pursuit of Literature, Science and Art, in the manner provided in this Law, that is to say,--(1) By establishing and maintaining in Kingston an Institution comprising a Public Library, Reading room, Museum, and Collection of works and Illustrations of Science and Art…” The passage of the Institute of Jamaica Law of 1879 was designed to achieve two goals. The first and chief goal was to quell racial tensions which had erupted with the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 by providing cultural enfranchisement to the Jamaican elite and masses as a substitute for political enfranchisement. The second goal was to fill a cultural void because no facility of its kind existed in the British West Indies.

75 The Straits Observer (Singapore) 6 July 1897.
76 The Eastern Courier (Singapore), 11 May 1929.
Prior to the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, the aftermath of the abolition of slavery in 1834 and the apprenticeship system in 1838 left in its wake deep racial, social, economic and cultural scars. Economically the passage of the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 by the British Parliament ended the colonizer’s monopoly on the sugar trade and hastened the collapse of an industry that was already in a state of decline. For the West Indies planters and merchants, this economic slide created a loss in revenue that compelled them to switch to less labor-intensive crops such as bananas to make a profit and keep their plantations. For the colonized masses, the decline in the sugar industry had serious consequences as well. “Slavery had tended to hold down the growth of population; after emancipation population increased rapidly. There were, however, no new labor-intensive industries to absorb the increase.”

For the colonized elite, the decline in the sugar industry and the end of the apprenticeship system created an opportunity for political enfranchisement which they had not previously enjoyed. For example, within the Planter Party Afro-Jamaican representation in the Jamaica Assembly never reached five in number for any given year from 1837 to 1859. In the Town Party, by contrast, which represented the anti-Planter interests in Jamaican society, Afro-Jamaican representation reached double-digits in every year from 1844 to 1863. In 1838 there were 7 Afro-Jamaicans representing the Town Party in the Jamaica Assembly out of a total of 9 Town Party lawmakers and 44 total seats. In 1848 there were 11 Afro-Jamaicans out of a total of 19 Town Party legislators and 43 total seats and by 1858 those numbers peaked at 15 out of a total of 28 Town Party lawmakers and 43 available seats. While the indigenous elite suffered setbacks in implementing its education and electoral law reform due to the Planter Party’s veto of its agenda in the Legislative Council, they were politically enfranchised and served as a social buffer between the colonizer elite and the colonized masses.

This relationship changed however with the passage of the Franchise Act of 1859 which “imposed a ten-shilling poll tax on all voters, which had the effect of slashing the

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voter rolls and drastically curtailing black and brown representation in the Assembly.”80

With this political disenfranchisement, an economic decline and rampant unemployment came incidents of civil unrest between the Jamaican masses and law enforcement that fuelled the former’s social disenfranchisement and contributed to the exploding powder keg that was the Morant Bay Rebellion.

Racial tensions were far from new in Jamaica. Twenty years prior to this watershed event in Jamaican history, racial tensions and social unrest between the Jamaicans and the British began to build. On 27 December 1841 a series of riots erupted in Kingston as a consequence of police efforts to carry out the order of the Mayor, the Honorable Hector Mitchell, to silence the usual Christmas drumming. Two men were shot and several were wounded by the police while the military and the island militia were called out under the leadership of Major-General William Maynard Gomm to restore order to Kingston.81 In June and July 1848 it was reported that “Great excitement [erupted] among the peasantry in consequence of rumors that the Island was to be transferred to the United States of America, with the restoration of slavery. Detachments of Police [were] sent to St. Mary and Westmoreland to preserve the peace and a Proclamation issued assuring the people of the groundlessness of the reports.”82 Finally in 1859 riots in Falmouth erupted over the trial of squatters on the Florence Hill Estate. Five persons were shot and several wounded by the police with those rioters that were arrested being tried by a special commission.83 Thus while racial violence was nothing new, the scope and scale of the Morant Bay Rebellion made the incident an unprecedented event in the nineteenth century history of Jamaica.

Within this worsening political, social and economic crucible; two Afro-Jamaican Baptist ministers, George William Gordon and Paul Bogle, launched a peaceful demonstration to protest the unlawful arrests of Afro-Jamaican residents of Morant Bay. What started as a non-violent mass demonstration on 11 October 1865 escalated into a full scale uprising which engulfed the entire county of Surrey. During the two week

80 Ibid, 256.
82 Ibid, 37.
83 Ibid, 39.
rebellion, fifteen hundred to two thousand people were estimated to have joined Gordon and Bogle’s ranks. While there was a mix of men and women, Afro-Jamaicans and free people of color, the majority of the rebels were comprised from Jamaican sugar plantation workers and free settlers. Though Gordon and Bogle in their original complaints to Governor Eyre and the Colonial Office called for social justice and equity between the British and the Jamaican masses, the rebels added their own demands for equitable land distribution, lower taxation, higher wages and better working conditions to the complaints of their leaders. When Gordon and Bogle addressed these matters in a formal petition to Governor Eyre, he rejected their demands and declared martial law for Surrey County on 13 October 1865.

Hastily forming a war council comprised of British and Jamaican elites loyal to the Crown, Eyre assembled British Army troops, Royal Naval forces, the island militia and the Maroons—Jamaican ex-slaves who secured their freedom through a treaty with the British in 1795—to quell the rebellion, restore calm, hunt down Gordon and Bogle and bring the ringleaders to justice. Governor Eyre succeeded in these endeavors but did so by ordering the execution of almost five hundred rebels, the flogging of hundreds more, the burning of over a thousand homes and the hanging of Gordon and Bogle as traitors to the Crown.84

Though the British and Jamaican elite won a decisive physical contest against the rebels on the island, they were psychologically shaken by the uprising and their personal fears of a politically enfranchised Jamaican populace electing themselves into power and driving the British from the island. Fanning these fears of a second Haiti, Governor Eyre on 7 November 1865 introduced to the Jamaican legislature a bill “providing for the abolition of the existing Chambers [of the Jamaican Parliament], and the appointment of a Legislative Council consisting of 24 members, half of whom should be nominated by the Crown and half-elected, four for each of the Counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Cornwall.”85 Though the Jamaican legislature agreed to vote itself out of existence under these terms, the Colonial Office rejected this proposal and called for the Jamaican

government to surrender its power and authority to the Crown. On 22 December 1865 the Jamaican legislature complied with the Colonial Office’s request and by June of the following year, the island of Jamaica officially became a crown colony of the British Empire.

In spite of this change of status, the Morant Bay Rebellion presented itself as a racial and social wound which needed to be healed. One aspect of this healing process was the appointment of a Royal Commission led by Sir Henry Knight Storks, who was also commissioned to replace Eyre as the governor of Jamaica. From 23 January to 21 March 1866, the Storks Commission inquired into the political and social circumstances which led to the Morant Bay Rebellion as well as the actions of both the rebels and the colonial government during that insurrection. In July 1866 the Storks Commission presented its findings to the British Parliament and offered the following conclusions. 

“'(1) That the punishments inflicted during the Martial Law were excessive; (2) that the punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent; (3) that the floggings were reckless, and at Bath positively barbarous; and (4) that the burning of one thousand homes was wanton and cruel.’ The Commissioners also reported that ‘the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to lawful authority’ and that ‘a principal object of the disturbers of order was the obtaining of land free from the payment of rent.’”

Within the crown colony of Jamaica, the findings of the Storks Commission also led to two law enforcement reforms which helped to repair the social and racial rift between the Jamaicans and the British. The first reform occurred in April 1867 and involved the organization of a semi-military constabulary to replace the island police and the second reform was the disbandment of the Island Volunteer Force and the confiscation of their arms. According to some contemporary observers, these measures reduced much of the hostility which existed between the Jamaicans and the British.

86 Ibid, 42.
87 Sir John Peter Grant, the newly appointed Governor of Jamaica who succeeded Storks on 5 August 1866 reported, “a state of contentment and of willing obedience to the law, in striking contrast with the state of feeling reported to have existed in 1865, has sown itself not only in an absence of all riotous spirit but in a great diminution of ordinary crime.” This statement can be found in Two Members of the Jamaica Civil Service. The Handbook of Jamaica for 1881: Comprising Historical and Statistical Information; Together with Essays on Economic Plants and Other Subjects Connected with the Island. Kingston: Government Printing Establishment, 1881, 42-43.
A third though much delayed measure to complete the healing process between the British and the Jamaicans could also be found in the creation of an artistic, scientific and cultural center designed to cater to the entertainment and information needs of all who resided in Jamaica. “By 1872 British officialdom—and Musgrave in particular—must have realized what the French and the Spaniards had realized hundreds of years before: that political and military control had to be supplemented, if not reinforced, by intellectual control. The foundation of the Institute of Jamaica undoubtedly stemmed in part from this realization.”

The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was created to provide the Jamaicans and the European non-elite with the illusion of a cultural stake in the life of the colony as opposed to a meaningful political stake in the colonial government.

But there is a second potential reason why the Institute of Jamaica came into existence. It was because at that point in time there was no institute of its kind in the British-controlled areas of the Caribbean. While subscription libraries still flourished, the Institute of Jamaica was unique as a true cultural center for the entire region. Located at Date Tree Hall in Kingston, the Institute of Jamaica incorporated into its facility the libraries of both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council as well as the Museum of the Royal Society of Arts and Agriculture in 1879. It also installed an art gallery, reading room and lecture hall by 1895; and created a distinct special collection in the form of the West India Reference Library by 1920.

However, the same law that brought the Institute of Jamaica into existence also limited its membership to the British and Jamaican elite “by making provision for the admission of life members and annual subscribing members to the Institute, and for affording to such members special privileges in relation to the use of the Institute, and in the relation to attendance at meetings and lectures and courses to instruction to be given

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89 Frank Cundall, The Handbook of Jamaica for 1920: Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Island, Compiled from Official and Other Reliable Records. Kingston: Government Printing Office, 1920, 225. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘special collections’ will be defined as follows: Some libraries segregate from the general collection rare books, manuscripts, papers and other items that are (1) of a certain form, (2) on a certain subject, (3) of a certain time period or geographic area, (4) in fragile or poor condition, or (5) especially valuable. This definition can be found in Joan M. Reitz, ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, 2002. Online. Available from http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html. Accessed May 3, 2008.
at the Institution or under the direction of the Board.\(^{90}\) In 1891 the subscription fee for
the Institute of Jamaica was an exorbitant 10 shillings per year which prompted a
prolonged battle involving the British and Jamaican elites against the European non-elite
and Jamaican masses for the conversion of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica
from a subscription library which only the privileged few could enjoy into a public
library which would be open to the colonizer non-elite and indigenous masses alike. To
address this problem, the Board of the Governors of the Institute of Jamaica launched an
aggressive plan to extend the public services of the General Library to the island
community at large.

There is nothing in the Institute of Jamaica’s legal mandate which required it to
engage in community outreach beyond what it could provide within its walls. However,
by 1900 the Institute of Jamaica

with a view to enabling those at a distance to participate in the use of the
Library, various Branches of the Institute have been formed from time to
time in Savanna-la-Mar, Falmouth, Black River, Lucea, May Pen
(Clarendon), Port Antonio, Spanish Town and Montego Bay…Members
of the Branch has the right to borrow books. Boxes of books are also sent
to local societies, at a charge of £2 10s; per 100 volumes per annum, at
Chapelton, Black River, Manchineal and Rio Bueno.\(^{91}\)

The strength of these book-box branches resided in the public impression it
created among the British elite, the Jamaican elite, the European non-elite and the
Jamaican masses that the Institute of Jamaica was attempting to provide an island-wide
service to meet the educational and entertainment needs of the reading public. The
weakness of this system was its intermittence and the very limited choice it offered to
potential readers who could only peruse what was available in the book box. While these
shortcomings did not go unnoticed, the book-box branches did largely silence the
Institute of Jamaica’s critics until 1912. In that year, the Clerk to the Legislative Council,

\(^{91}\) T.L. Roxburgh and Jos. C. Ford, The Handbook of Jamaica for 1900: Published by Authority Comprising
Historical, Statistical and General Information Concerning the Island. Kingston: Government Printing
Office, 1900, 223.
Philip Stern, as a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica, challenged the value of collecting subscription fees at that institution.

In advance of an upcoming debate at a special meeting of the Board of Governors, an editorial on Philip Stern’s challenge was published in *The Jamaica Times*:

> Whether Mr. Stern’s way will improve matters need a little consideration. He is right in feeling dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. We cannot however persuade ourselves that making the Institute free to all and sundry will improve matters in any real way. In fact, it appears to us that, such a step would be dangerous to what is and should continue to be one of the aims of the Institute. That there should be a “free” wing, or a practically free wing, to the Institute we agree. We have argued for it again and again, if not directly, by inference; but if the whole thing is to be made “free,” it will be a bit absurd to talk of “membership” at all…The pulling down of all walls by so called “free membership” will bring the Institute down to a position in which it cannot long continue. It would then be too much in the direction opposite to the one at the extreme of which it has hitherto existed.  

On 2 February 1912 when the Chairman of the Board, the Honorable J.R. Williams convened the special meeting of the Board of Governors and confronted Stern upon this issue noting that the law which created the Institute mandated that a subscription be set. Stern replied that “he had brought forward the notion more with the intention of bringing the anomalous position with regard to the subscriptions to the attention of the Board of Governors, so that the Board could remove the anamoly. He was not wedded to the notion to make it [the Institute of Jamaica] free and he would alter it and fix the [subscription] amount at 2/6.”

Stern then went on to cite a loophole that existed in a mutual membership agreement the Institute of Jamaica had with the Kingston Athenaeum as the chief source of his concern, “that no one would give 5/ subscription to the Institute when by joining the Athenaeum for the same sum he could become a member of two societies for the

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92 *The Jamaica Times* (Kingston), 13 January 1912.
93 *The Gleaner* (Kingston), 3 February 1912. The indicated subscription amount of 2/6 is defined as £2 and 6 shillings.
same amount...If it was not intended to be a source of revenue why did they have a subscription at all?" This comment touched off a firestorm of recrimination. A British lawyer, Robert S. Gamble who opposed the motion declared that the situation was not similar and outlined why the present arrangement with the Kingston Athenaeum had to stand. The proprietor of The Times Store, Walter Durie took offense and retorted that Stern’s resolution was an unfair and ungrateful attack on the Kingston Athenaeum which had helped to popularize the Institute throughout the city. The Chairman recommended that Stern was approaching the problem from the wrong angle and that a consolidating law was needed to have affiliated societies pay a small fee to the Institute, roughly half that which members pay, to successfully address this matter rather than ending the subscriptions. “Mr. Stern said as he had listened with pleasure to the remarks of Mr. Dunn and the Chairman. He would take no notice of the others as the TONE OF THEIR REMARKS was a bit personal. His original proposal was to make it free, but from what the Chairman said he altered it to 2/6.”

Such was one battle in the larger and longer war to bring a public library to Jamaica and convert the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica into a public library. In response to this call and other attacks from various social quarters among the British and Jamaican elite, Frank Cundall, the Secretary and Librarian of the Institute of Jamaica, enacted by 1915 a teacher’s library in which twelve book-boxes containing twenty-five books each were circulated among the Elementary School Teachers Associations in multiple locations throughout the island. Though it was solely directed towards benefiting the children of the Jamaican masses and the European non-elite, this latest innovation by the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica did silence its critics for a time. But during the following period, these calls for the Institute of Jamaica to convert from a subscription library into a public library would be renewed with far-reaching consequences.

94 Ibid, 3 February 1912. The indicated subscription fee of 5/ is defined as £5.
95 Ibid, 3 February 1912.
The Colonial Subscription Library as Place

The two subscription libraries under study during this time period, the Penang Library and the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica represented two different things to the library communities they served. The Penang Library was viewed as a cherished intellectual institution by those who subscribed to it and as a social sanctuary which they did not want to see violated. While these sentiments towards this institution were genuine and strong, they were far from being unique. Similar desires to maintain and preserve the Britishness of colonial cultural institutions can be found in the colonizer elite’s veneration of the clubs and hill stations of British India.

With regards to clubs, Mrinalini Sinha, author of “Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere” noted “the clubs served both to divide people and to mobilize them on the basis of specific sociopolitical identities. It was precisely this generative role of the clubs—in fashioning a white British self—that implicated the cultural politics of clubbability in a specific enactment of ‘whiteness’ in colonial India.”97 As much as clubbability helped define and separated British citizens from British subjects, the colonizer from the colonized, and the British elite from the European non-elite, it also established who did and did not have accessibility to power. Much like the Penang Library and the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica, the leadership and membership of the clubs were comprised of some of the most powerful, wealthiest and influential members of colonizer elite society. Within the smoking rooms and lounges of these institutions, the colonizers debated and sometimes decided the pressing social, economic, political and military questions the British Raj confronted.

Those who dwelled outside of these clubs were neither party to these debates nor this decision making process and were labeled as rebels and outcasts. In describing the difference between rebels and outcasts Lieutenant-General Reginald Savory, who served in India from 1914 until 1947 intimated, “If you did not belong to the Club you were an outcast…Either you were a rebel, and a rather courageous rebel, who did not belong to the club, or else you were a social outcast who wanted to belong to the club and couldn’t

Aside from these British and European rebels and outcasts, it was challenges by the indigenous elite to gain membership to these clubs which brought forth the colonizer elite’s stalwart defense of clubland’s exclusivity. H.T. Wickham, Superintendent of Police at Bishraw in 1921, recalled, “The Club was a purely private club supported by subscriptions from members who had to be elected, and when the question of permitting Indians to join arose a large number of the members didn’t like it.” A similar stance was adopted with regards to the hill stations of India.

Dane Kennedy, the author of The Magic Mountains, provided a description of the hill stations in India, “Hill stations offered enclaves where the British could restore the physical and psychic energies they needed for their imperial tasks, replicate the social and cultural environments that embodied the values they sought to project, and regulate and reproduce the individual agents who were vital to the continuance of their rule.” Like clubs and subscription libraries, hill stations segregated the British elite from the European non-elite, the Indian elite and the Indian masses. While the colonizer elite utilized race and income as socio-economic barriers to protect the Britishness of the hill stations throughout the nineteenth century, accessibility to power existed as a key component of the hill station exclusivity and the resistance from the Indian elite this exclusivity engendered. For example, in the late-nineteenth century a storm of criticism erupted from the indigenous elite over colonizer elite-imposed access restrictions to the hill stations.

The commercial and professional elites of Calcutta, Madras, and other Indian metropolises organized rallies and submitted petitions protesting their diminishing access to officialdom in its highland retreats…The viceroy and his officials fought off these attacks with all the skill and tenacity that an entrenched bureaucracy possesses, marshaling a shrewd combination of arguments and inertia to resist any withdrawal from the

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99 Ibid., 103.
hill stations...All the parties in this debate over hill stations understood that it was a wrangle over access to the state, a struggle for power.\textsuperscript{101}

These battles to preserve the Britishness and control the accessibility to power of the clubs and hill stations in India by the colonizer elite were echoes of the struggles by the British elite in Malaysia to preserve the social sanctity and intellectual character of the Penang Library. For example, the \textit{Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle} reported,

On Wednesday morning the frequentors of the library were rather surprised to find that the newspapers, etc. had been put out in the sun to dry. On enquiries being made the only answer that could be got was, “d… the ball of last night.” We were afterwards informed \textit{[sic]} that some of the shentlemans \textit{[sic]} who were present at the entertainment were so inconsiderate as to turn the health office. Which is exactly above the reading room, into something like a bathroom, with the consequences that the water dripping through the floor caused sad havoc amongst the newspapers that were lying on the table below…”\textsuperscript{102}

By their reaction to this incident, it can be seen that the subscribers genuinely cared about the welfare of their library and the quality of their collection. The Penang Library was not considered by its subscribers to be a dispensable book club or a temporary circulating library like those in the British metropolis or the colony of Jamaica whose financial fortunes were subject to market forces or an agriculturally-based economy. These subscribers wanted much more for their library than mere survival, they wanted The Penang Library to grow in terms of its collection and prosper in terms of its budget. This desire, pride and will to see the Penang Library succeed was a distant echo of British middle-class life in the nineteenth century metropolis. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in \textit{Family Fortunes} noticed, “Middle-class claims for new forms of manliness found one of their most powerful expressions in formal associations…Men organized themselves in a myriad of ways, promoting their economic interests, providing soup kitchens for the poor, cultivating the arts, reaching into populated urban areas and

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{102} The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle (Georgetown), 13 June 1891.
rural outposts.” 103 This claim of manliness by British middle class males and the pride generated in building and maintaining these formal associations can also be seen within the stalwart protectiveness of the British elite over the Penang Library. For example, when the integrity of the library’s collection was called into question, the Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle once again came to the defense of the Penang Library when it reported,

The Penang Library Committee intend to order about $1,000 worth of books from Europe this year. In 1890 some 250 works were received. The majority of which failed to give satisfaction to the readers. A good plan would be for the committee to call upon the subscribers to send in a list on which each of them would indicate the name of, say, 50 or 100 of the privileged works they should like to see on the library shelves, and then to order those that would meet with the largest amount of patronage. We would then realize the pleasure of witnessing a competitive examination of the literary taste of the inhabitants of the settlement, a thing which the census papers entirely failed to supply us with. Besides, the result of such a step would be that the majority of subscribers, elated at the tribute paid to their judgment, would do their utmost to induce their friends to subscribe, and that the library funds would be greatly improved thereby. 104

This desire to see the library succeed by recommending a strategy of collection development based upon the reading interests of its subscribers reveals that the Penang Library was valued by its membership who may have spent a considerable amount of their leisure time either reading the books they borrowed from the library or within the facility itself. 105 An indication of this time allocation could be found in The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle which complained, “We would draw the attention of

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104 Ibid, 29 April 1891.
105 For the purpose of this study, the term ‘collection development’ will be defined as follows: The process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library’s clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. This definition can be found in Joan M. Reitz, ODLIS: Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, 2002. Online. Available from http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html.
the library committee to the state of the rattan chairs in the reading room. Some of them are getting blind of one eye and others are turning lame. Considering that £100 has lately been invested in the purchase of new books, we have no doubt that a few dollars could be found to replace these chairs...”

After all, it is fair to assume that if readers wanted to spend time reading books in a library they would want to do so with a reasonable degree of comfort.

With regards to its budget, *The Straits Observer* noted in 1897,

The grant from colonial funds to the local library was made as far back as 1880 when the dollar was worth 3/10. Its amount was fixed a $1,500 per annum—not a very large sum, when it is considered that that allowed to the Singapore institution was $6,500. Since that date, the dollar has fallen to half its then value, by successive steps but the grant has not increased in the like, or any, ratio...What has Penang done? Needless to say, she has remained passive up till now, when she appears to have tardily realized that times have changed and her library committee have at length appeared to the government for an increase in the vote…The request now put forward by the committee is a modest one. It is only for an increase of $900, as against the $2,500 already allowed to the already vastly more liberal Singapore vote.

This outcry for the Penang Library committee to be more aggressive in seeking its fair share of the Straits Settlements government grant money offers further proof that subscribers wanted this library to do exceedingly well especially when compared to its counterpart in Singapore. However, as much as the Penang Library was a sanctuary and an institution to satisfy the information and entertainment needs of its readers, the Penang Library during this era may not have been an institution for academic or scientific enlightenment. This point is suggested because no advertisements exist for any social, educational or scientific lectures in either the library’s annual reports or in the local newspapers which so diligently reported its major and minor events. In the life of its subscribers, the Penang Library probably served as a vital social link connecting them to

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106 *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* (Georgetown), 13 June 1891.
107 *The Straits Observer* (Singapore), 4 October 1897.
events in the rest of the British Empire and the world through its newspaper collection. It also probably served as a source of entertainment through its provision of a fiction collection while also reminding them of their Britishness through its non-fiction works.

The same cannot be true for the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica. Perhaps because of its official origins, the General Library to its subscribers served as a social center where they kept themselves informed about local events, international occurrences, new artistic pursuits and emerging scientific developments. This institution appeared to be much more central in the intellectual lives of its users than its Southeast Asian counterpart. By virtue of its dress code alone, the General Library probably was never the kind of institution where subscribers could relax. The rule pertaining to dress stated, “The unreserved Reading Rooms of the Library shall be free to all personsrespectably and decently clad; their use is, however, granted conditionally on compliance with the Regulations of the Board: and the Librarian may deny admission thereto, should he see cause, but he shall report every case of the kind to the Board at their first ordinary meeting thereafter.”

Absent as a site for relaxation, this subscription library may have served as an educational nexus for subscribers from 1879 to 1910 yet transitioned into an entertainment venue from 1915 to 1925.

When one weighs the size of the prose fiction, poetry and drama, and biography portions of the General Library’s collection against the size of its theology and ecclesiastical history, history, and science and natural history collections, one finds the overall collection slanted towards academic topics earlier in its history yet gradually giving way to entertainment related topics.

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Table 2: Sample Collection Size and Content of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica from 1900 to 1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject &amp; Years</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1915</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theology &amp; Ecclesiastical History</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1,429</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>1,549</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>2,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Natural History</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,765</td>
<td>1,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td><strong>3,072</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,194</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,323</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,634</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,259</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,924</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>1,307</td>
<td>1,591</td>
<td>1,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry &amp; Drama</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose Fiction</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>2,701</td>
<td>3,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td><strong>2,674</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,965</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,982</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,853</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,760</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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It is not known whether this gradual shift was a result of subscriber requests for more fictional, poetic, biographical or dramatic works or whether it was part of a larger trend to make the library more entertaining to old subscribers and more inviting to new ones. What is known is that the General Library during this era served as one part of a larger educational nexus because of the other facilities that existed within its immediate surroundings.

The Institute of Jamaica boasted an art gallery that contained portraits of the leaders and history of Jamaica. It also contained a museum that displayed exhibits representing the island’s flora and fauna. This subscription library also published in-house academic and scientific publications on topics as mundane as *The Mineral Springs of Jamaica* by J.C. Phillippo, an English doctor, in 1891 and as esoteric as *Systematic Catalogue of the Land and Fresh Water Shells of Jamaica* by Henry Vendryes, an

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English solicitor, in 1899. Scholarly and non-scholarly lectures were also provided on a periodic basis and on a wide variety of topics. But due to the passage of an amendment to the Institute of Jamaica Law in 1909, the General Library and its environs assumed a new role. Law 3 of 1909 authorized the membership of the Kingston Athenaeum and similar British societies throughout Jamaica to seek membership to the Institute of Jamaica on a subscription-free annual basis as long as they applied to the Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica and satisfied him with proof that they paid their subscription to their respective societies. Initially only three institutions took advantage of this law. By 1925, 23 institutions had taken advantage of Law 3 of 1909.

What this legal amendment to the Institute of Jamaica Law potentially created was a networking center where formal and informal meetings, discussions and conferences could take place among the colonizer and colonized elite of Jamaican society. The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica may have been an informational, educational and social crucible not for relaxation but for the more active pursuits of learning, networking, appreciating the arts and entertaining oneself through an eclectic collection of reading materials, exhibits, lectures and displays.

These colonial subscription libraries also served as mirror images of their metropolitan counterparts. As James Raven, author of “Libraries for Sociability” noted, Subscription libraries such as those at Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Sheffield and Nottingham supplied the texts to foster political argument, but also ensured a sociability that survived political divisions among members. Such libraries encouraged interest in modern science and


ancient scholarship, assisted in the transference of notions of civil society, and constructed and sustained a particular vision of civilized identity. ¹¹²

While the founding of the Penang Library was largely apolitical and the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was incubated in a political and racial crucible, both institutions served a social need to inform, to educate and to entertain their respective memberships through scholarly and non-scholarly works much as their metropolitan predecessors did. However, these assessments of the library as place for both the Penang Library and the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica are only indicative for this period of subscription library dominance. Change was as much a part of the subscription library as place as it was the content of their collections.

The End of Subscription Library Dominance

By the late-nineteenth century, colonial subscription librarianship started to shift from solely satisfying the information and entertainment needs of its membership to catering to some of the information and entertainment needs of the European non-elite and the indigenous masses in Malaysia and Jamaica. But beyond merely citing the passage of the Colonial Development Act of 1929 as the endpoint of this period, no examination of it would be complete without an analysis of the imperial attitudes and mindset of the British metropolitan and colonizer elites before and after the late 1870s and early 1880s.

In the British colony of Jamaica, after the abolition of the apprenticeship system in 1834 and prior to the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865 the Jamaican elite and masses were subject to the planter’s and the missionaries’ worldview of who they believed the colonized to be. The planters viewed their ex-slaves as a useless, lazy and stubborn people whose value ended with the abolition of slavery. In the aftermath of the apprenticeship system, they advocated African and Chinese immigration to substitute for their loss of labor. The missionaries on the other hand embraced paternalism and believed the colonized to be their poor black clients who needed nurturing and guidance to become industrious, respectable, familial, domesticated British subjects and good

The Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 shattered both of these notions and compelled the planters and the missionaries to endorse crown colony rule for two related reasons. The planters wanted crown colony rule because they feared what an educated colonized electorate would do if it came to power. The missionaries wanted crown colony rule because “Jamaica, they believed, could not govern itself until there was an educated black electorate.”

The imposition of crown colony rule in Jamaica also served as an early manifestation of the concept of The White Man’s Burden. As Thomas Holt observed in *The Problem of Freedom*, “The boon of freedom—the right to govern oneself—should be granted only to those who had assimilated certain internal controls. For liberals and conservatives alike, work discipline was both the source and test of internal controls, and those who failed to demonstrate that discipline were fit only to be ruled by others. By 1865, few voices disputed that ex-slaves had failed that test.”

The economic state of the post-abolition Jamaica, the Morant Bay Rebellion and the public debate over the multiple trials and acquittals of former Governor Eyre for his role in the rebellion fueled this line of thought and sparked a new brand of racism which denigrated Africans both in the Diaspora and in Africa as being sub-human.

From the scholarly works of the Scottish historian, Thomas Carlyle, and the English naturalist, Charles Darwin, to the political speeches of Sir Charles W. Dilke, MP for Chelsea, and the Earl of Derby, a member of the House of Lords, a denigrating perception of the colonized began to develop which sought to justify the right of the colonizer to dominate and control the colonized. “The savage, the primitive, the yet to be civilized, were invariably stigmatized as under-worked and oversexed, their material interests or drives un-aroused, while their libidos were out of control.”

This need to establish control over those who knew no control was the hallmark of this new racial ideology.

114 Ibid, 357.
This line of thought not only gave rise to the concept of The White Man’s Burden in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it also trapped both the Jamaican elite and masses in a colonial and metropolitan system of control which was not released until Jamaican independence was achieved in 1962. On the metropolitan level, the Jamaicans were viewed as needing to be shepherded by the Crown because their first attempt at assuming the responsibilities of freedom had ended in a catastrophic disaster. For British planters, missionaries, scholars and statesmen, Jamaicans were simply not—if they ever could be—fit for self-rule. The colonial government and the planters did believe that the colonized should have an illusory cultural stake in the colonial system, if for no other reason than to placate any desires they may have had for a political stake in the system, or repeating the Morant Bay Rebellion on an island-wide scale.

In the British colony of Malaysia, the success of “Macaulayism” and an accumulated debt compelled the Penang Library to open its doors to less wealthy groups than it was used to admitting. The British historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay in his famous minutes on education advocated that English as the *lingua franca* of the British Empire should be taught in all colonial schools to the colonized. He also believed that while it was financially infeasible to educate all of the indigenous masses, a colonized elite should be created to serve as interpreters between the British and the indigenous masses.

Macaulay suggested this trained colonized elite should be culturally and intellectually enfranchised to be British in thought and in action.\(^{117}\) Though this viewpoint originated in India, it quickly spread to Malaysia when the *Penang Argus and Mercantile Advertiser* declared

> The common-sense view of the matter appears to us to be this—In India and throughout the East, English must be, for a long time to come, (what Latin was in Europe for a thousand years) the best means of acquiring and communicating European knowledge. But some elementary knowledge may surely be conveyed in the vernaculars of Eastern countries…At the same it must be said, that there is scarcely any kind of secular knowledge,

which will be of more use to a native of the East, than a knowledge of
English.¹¹⁸

This may have been the logic of the Straits Settlements government when the
Penang Library approached them for a grant to cover their debts in 1880. This is also the
reason why the colonial government insisted on the creation and maintenance of a
reading room that would be open to the public. The goal was to improve the reading
habits of the colonized elite at a minimal expense and culturally enfranchise them in the
English language. The goal was not to provide the colonized elite with a cultural stake in
the colonial system similar to that in Jamaica. In addition to their respective cultural
backgrounds; Chinese, Indian and Malay civil servants already possessed a working
knowledge of British culture through their English language instruction and training in
clerical and non-clerical work. The goal of the Straits Settlements government was to
offer the colonized elite an opportunity to preserve what they already possessed by
providing them with access to a reading room that could meet their informational,
educational and entertainment needs beyond what was required for the civil service
examination.

The Penang Library’s indebtedness in 1880 provided the colonial government
with the perfect opportunity they needed to attempt to achieve their goal without
enduring the additional expense of creating a public library with government funds. And
while the new racism which swept the British metropolis and the colony of Jamaica may
have reached Malaysian society, it can be said that both the colonizer and the colonized
elite agreed that racial coexistence defined by racial segregation permeated the colony
during the 1910s and 1920s. Charles Hirschman, author of “The Making of Race in
Colonial Malaya” asserted the premise that under British colonialism the racial and ethnic
communities of Malaysia were occupationally segregated. Mining and plantation
agriculture was the preserve of Chinese and Indian labor while Malays engaged in
subsistence agriculture in rural settings.¹¹⁹ But these divisions did not necessarily mean
that racial anger and resentment were slowly simmering beneath the placid surface of
racial coexistence. If the recollections of the British and Malaysian elites are to be

¹¹⁸ The Penang Argus and Mercantile Advertiser (Georgetown), 26 March 1868.
Sociological Forum 1, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 353.
believed quite the opposite was true. George Maxwell, a British civil servant in the Straits Settlements government reported,

> With thirty-five years service in Malaya, and with intimate friendship with Rulers over two generations, I can say that I never heard one of them say anything that would tend to support such an idea [exclusion of non-Malays from administrative appointments]. From the very earliest days of British protection, the Rulers have welcomed the leaders of the Chinese communities as members of their State Councils, and have paid the greatest deference to their opinions and advice.\(^\text{120}\)

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, reflected, “In my early years at school between 1910 and 1920, I found that there were no Chinese schools in the country at all...In those days the Straits-born and Malayan Chinese were in every respect close to the Malays as inhabitants of the country.”\(^\text{121}\) In 1927 Reverend E.A. Hone, Commissary to the Bishop of Singapore declared within the pages of *The Times*,

> As one who spent over 11 happy years in the Golden Chersonese ministering to our fellow-countrymen and Asiatic Christians, I can heartily endorse the Bishop of London’s remarks about Malaya. That there is harmony instead of ‘clash of colour’ in Malaya is largely due, I believe, not only to the prosperity of the country, but to the wise and just administration of our Civil servants and the considerable treatment of their Asiatic employees by our rubber planters and tin-miners.\(^\text{122}\)

While racial tensions in Jamaica lead to changes in library policy, racial accord in Malaysia was more evident. Nevertheless, within two years of the publication of Reverend Hone’s remarks the introduction of a single bill in the British Parliament would end the period of subscription library dominance. Before an examination of the Colonial Development Bill of 1929 can be undertaken, an analysis of the British metropolis’ political and economic conditions that warranted the passage of this Act must be conducted.

\(^{120}\) George Maxwell, “The Mixed Communities of Malaya.” *British Malaya* (February 1943): 118.  
\(^{122}\) *The Times* (London), 23 February 1927.
CHAPTER 2

INSTITUTIONAL SHIFTS IN THE METROPOLIS (1914-1945)

The institutional shifts which occurred within the metropolis began with the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and continued until the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. During this period, Great Britain experienced political and economic changes which compelled the British government to abandon its policy of laissez-faire colonial development and adopt a hands-on policy of colonial development. World War I and the economic hardships Great Britain endured after the conflict served as a catalyst for these changes.

To achieve victory in World War I, the British government reorganized, retooled and re-tasked British agriculture, industry and manpower from its previous function of meeting civilian consumer needs to supporting the war effort. Agriculture and industries such as coal and steel were nationalized while the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and other labor groups were co-opted to meet production quotas which armed and supplied the British military for the duration of the conflict. When the war ended, the British government gradually removed these controls but confronted a sizable debt which it accrued to pay for these measures. In 1913 the National Debt stood at £0.6 billion, by 1919 it had risen to £7.7 billion with most of it contracted through borrowing at high interest rates. The result of this heavy borrowing was a rise in debt service charges from 11 percent of government expenditure in 1913 to 20 percent in 1920.\(^\text{123}\)

In an effort to eliminate the National Debt and stabilize the British economy, the British government returned Great Britain to the Gold Standard in 1925. This economic move overpriced the value of the British pound sterling from an estimated 2.5 percent to 10 percent making British manufactured goods expensive to sell abroad.\(^\text{124}\) This added expense and Great Britain’s long standing trade policy of exporting low-income products to low-income countries rather than high-income products to high-income countries further crippled Britain’s economic performance throughout the 1920s and reduced the nation’s share of international trade.

\(^{124}\) Ibid, 127.
The denationalization of British agriculture and industry also had a debilitating effect on the British economy. When the metropolis removed their controls over these economic sectors, they also removed their subsidies. The owners of these sectors periodically cut wages for the first half of the 1920s to compensate for the losses of these subsidies. The TUC and other labor groups responded to these wage cuts by orchestrating the General Strike of 1926 which psychologically rattled both the owners into rethinking their business practices and the metropolitan government into rethinking its economic policies at the end of the decade. Another problem which compelled the metropolitan government to further rethink their economic policies was a chronic and persistently high level of unemployment.

For the duration of the 1920s, the unemployment level in Great Britain never dropped below 2.5 percent. For the month of March in 1920 the percentage of insured workers who were unemployed accounted for 3.4 percent, by 1923 this level skyrocketed to 11.2 percent. In 1926 the unemployment level dropped to 10.4 percent but never moved below 10 percent between 1926 and 1929. By the last year of the 1920s, the unemployment level had crested at 10.6 percent.¹²⁵

In an attempt to lower these high unemployment levels, the British government underwrote the Kenya-Uganda Railway Loans of 1924 and passed the Palestine-East African Guaranteed Loan Act of 1926. The former instilled railway loans of £3.5 million for an interest free period of five years. The latter provided £10 million for transport development throughout Palestine and the British colonies in East Africa.¹²⁶ Both measures were designed to spark employment in the engineering, manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the British economy. They failed because they were simply not broad enough to tackle the persistently high levels of unemployment which plagued Great Britain during the 1920s.

To combat Britain’s unemployment crisis in a concerted effort J.H. Thomas, the Lord Privy Seal, sponsored the Colonial Development Bill of 1929 which authorized the Treasury to “make advances to the Government of any colony or of any territory to which

this action applies, for the purpose of aiding and developing agriculture and industry in
the colony or territory, and thereby promoting commerce with or industry in the United
Kingdom."  

While the bill also mandated several provisions for capital works improvements throughout the colonies of the British Empire, this document failed to make provisions for the library development of the colonized masses. While some Members of Parliament (MPs) argued for an educational component to the bill which could have provided public library development in the colonies, the prevailing opinion on colonial education was that “many other things, like education, are not included in this measure…and it does not purport to make a new heaven and a new earth in any of these Colonies and Dependencies.”  

On 25 July 1929 the House of Lords agreed to the bill and on the following day it received the Royal Assent.

The Colonial Development Act of 1929 (CDA 1929) provided a constant source of funding for colonial development through grants and loans. The aim of CDA 1929 was to authorize the Treasury to establish the Colonial Development Fund (CDF) into which Parliament annually voted sums up to the annual maximum of £1 million. CDA 1929 created the Colonial Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) to review applications for assistance. The Act also stipulated that funding would be provided for development projects for the improvement of agricultural machinery, transportation, harbors, fisheries, forestry, surveys, land development, mining, electricity, water power, scientific research, public health and any other means which supported the aim of colonial development.

From 1929 to 1939 each of the colonies under this study requested funding from the CDAC. The governors of Nigeria submitted eleven applications for £1,023,929 to cover the costs of their development projects. The Straits Settlements Government submitted two applications and requested £17,250 for its public works projects while Jamaica submitted 35 applications and requested £930,039 for its development agenda.

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In spite of its role and function the real value or true impact of CDA 1929 resided within its dramatic policy switch from laissez-faire to hands-on colonial development. Under laissez-faire colonial development which lasted from the origins of the British Empire until 1929, all social, economic and cultural improvements to the colony resided within the hands of the colonial government itself. The metropolis was required to defend the colony, collect taxes and change colonial governors on a periodic basis but did little else beyond these basic obligations. From the moment it received the Royal Assent, CDA 1929 placed on the British Parliament and the Colonial Office at least part of the burden for colonial development. The metropolitan government was now also responsible for the economic welfare of the colonies, and it was only a matter of time before the social and cultural needs of those colonies would have to be addressed.

What compelled the British government to address these concerns was their high level of dependency upon the colonized elite to operate the colonial bureaucracy. The Colonial Office could not recruit enough British clerks, teachers, lawyers and other professionals who would be willing to endure the physical, cultural and social challenges of colonial life. The metropolis had to rely on teaching and training indigenous elite to fill these vacancies.

Another factor that contributed to the British government’s desire to meet the needs of the colonized was a question of the indigenous elite’s loyalty to the Crown. The question for the British was how loyal would the colonized elite and masses be when given a clear choice between British imperialism and German fascism. From the end of World War I to the end of World War II, the British metropolis came under steadily increasing propaganda attacks from colonial movements in Weimar Germany and propaganda agencies in Nazi Germany which exposed to the world many of the atrocities the British Empire committed against the people it colonized.

**The Root of the Nazi Threat**

In the aftermath of World War I, one of the root causes of Weimar Germany’s antagonism to the British Empire was the lack of a satisfactory answer to the German Colonial Question. The German Colonial Question centered on a single query: Is Germany worthy of recovering all or some of her colonial possessions which the Allies
captured during World War I? “Subsidiary the colonial question might have been; unimportant it was not…It remained a grievance that demanded redress and, for a matter of ‘unimportance’, remarkably live throughout the inter-war period…From 1929 onwards the revision of the colonial settlement of 1919 was included in all British estimates of German foreign policy aims.”  

One of the earliest propaganda attacks the Weimar Republic launched against British opposition to its bid for colonial retrocession was a text entitled *The Treatment of Native and Other Populations in the Colonial Possessions of Germany and England*. The agency which authored the text, the German Colonial Office, boldly declared, “It is clear to all the world that the British Government has cast desirous eyes upon the German Protectorates which are at present occupied by its troops, and that it wishes to incorporate them in the British Empire.” After citing numerous examples of British oral and written tributes to the German Empire on the management of its colonies, the German Colonial Office indicted the British on past colonial offences in Africa, Asia and North America. For example, “The punishment of the lash is allowed in all English colonies…But let us take a peep at the official documents of the West African courts! One of the first things we shall discover is that in Nigeria, for example, female prisoners were whipped; something which was strictly forbidden in every German colony.”

From punitive expeditions throughout British West Africa to the extermination of the Maori in New Zealand to the mistreatment of the indigenous populace of North America, the German Colonial Office systematically attacked the integrity of British colonial rule.

One year later, the British Foreign Office responded with a handbook entitled *German Colonization* which cited Otto von Bismarck, the first Chancellor of Germany, and his reluctance to build a colonial empire as a sign of German fearfulness to wield such a responsibility,

To him [Otto von Bismarck] it was a contradiction to talk of a German Empire oversea before the German Empire in Europe had been established. German statesmen, in general, were at that time impressed

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133 Ibid, 173.
more by the risks than the advantages of colonial empire; and unique opportunities of entering the ranks of colonial Powers were thus allowed to pass by unseized.”

Similar to its German counterpart, this text not only cited German mismanagement of the indigenous populations of New Guinea, Togol and East Africa but also emphasized German atrocities in response to the Hereros uprising in German Southwest Africa in 1903. “It was not until March 1907 that the rebellion was entirely quelled, by which time all but an insignificant number of the Hereros had either been killed or had fled the country. Colonel Leutwein estimated the native populations of South-West Africa as a whole in 1898 at 300,000; in 1912 it was estimated at only one-third of that number.”

For the duration of the 1920s, a literary propaganda war raged between the colonial societies of the Weimar Republic and the British government yet it never led to any subversive attempts by the German government to undermine British rule within its African, Caribbean and Asian colonies and mandates.

Within the context of officially supporting retrocession, the Weimar Republic made few substantive attempts to regain Germany’s former colonies. German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann raised the issue in a memorandum attached to Germany’s official letter seeking entry into the League of Nations on 12 December 1924. He asserted that while Article 22 of the League of Nations created the mandate system, Germany should be provided with a clear administrative role in the mandate system within the foreseeable future.

Though Germany was admitted to the League of Nations in 1926 and even gained a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission, the Weimar Republic was never awarded a mandate. “At Locarno, Germany’s ‘moral right to colonial mandates’ was voiced, but the administration took no action and made no pronouncement of policy.”

Beyond speeches by Stresemann emphasizing the need for retrocession on economic grounds and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, at the Paris Economic Conference of

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135 Ibid, 122.
1929 stating Germany’s need for “raw materials” as an argument for retrocession, Weimar Germany’s efforts to officially settle their colonial question were minimal at best.

Unofficially, the majority of activity on the German Colonial Question rested within twelve German colonial societies that merged into a single organization, the Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft (The Reich Colonial Society) or the KORAG. Through a small army of former colonial officials, former military men, professionals and likeminded patriots the KORAG engaged in a grassroots campaign through movies, radio, newspapers, school visits, speeches, art showings, and museum exhibitions to keep the German Colonial Question forefront in the minds of the German people.

The British government’s reaction to the KORAG was one of dismissal and considered its agitations to be nothing more than a routine nuisance. In a letter from the British Ambassador to Germany Sir Horace Rumbold to the British Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain on 15 February 1929 the author correctly assessed that the drive for German retrocession primarily originated with colonial societies as opposed to the German masses, that the Reichstag lacked the political and diplomatic capital to successfully pursue German retrocession and that Germany as a whole could not financially afford the cost of maintaining colonies yet “it is quite possible that within an appreciable time Germany may come to accept the loss of her former colonies as an established fact. This would not necessarily mean, however, that the seed of colonial desire was dead. It would merely be lying dormant in an unfavourable soil.” In 1933, fate delivered the KORAG into the hands of a single man who would perfect and elevate the tenor of German propaganda under his regime. This man was Adolph Hitler and his answer to the German Colonial Question was Lebensraum and a racial identification with the English people.

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Hitler, Great Britain and The German Colonial Question

While incarcerated in Landsberg am Lech prison for leading the failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, Adolph Hitler, assisted by Rudolf Hess, the future Deputy Chief of the Nazi Party, wrote Mein Kampf (My Struggle) which outlined in detail Hitler’s vision of Germany’s future. Within this text, Hitler explored the German Colonial Question:

Obviously, such a territorial policy [the acquisition of new land and new soil for the settling of the superfluous population], however, cannot find its fulfillment in the Cameroons, for example, but almost exclusively only in Europe…For Germany, therefore, the only possibility of carrying out a sound territorial policy was to be found in the acquisition of new soil in Europe proper. Colonies cannot serve this purpose, since they do not appear suitable for settlement with Europeans on a large scale.  

Though written in 1924, these were views which Hitler did not abandon even after he ascended to the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933. Lebensraum was the first aspect of Hitler’s world-view and it was the concept of Germany as a nation and the Aryans as a race obtaining living space in both Central and Eastern Europe to not only survive as a people but also to fulfill their ultimate destiny—the elimination of all inferior races (non-Aryan and non-German) and mastery of the world. During the 1920s and 1930s, Hitler echoed these sentiments repeatedly in numerous speaking engagements. In a speech delivered in Munich on 9 April 1927, Hitler declared, “If you do not give us space on this earth then we ourselves will take this space. That is why we are National Socialists. We fight for the vital rights of our people in this world.” In another speech to the Industry Club in Duesseldorf on 27 January 1932, Hitler announced, “If we want to build up a new internal market, if we want to solve the problem of our living space once again we shall need the collective political strength of the nation. Yes, when it is merely a question of our value as allies, always we must first make of Germany once more a political power-factor.” Lebensraum was only half of Hitler’s worldview, the other half was a racial identification with the English people.

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139 Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), 179, 181.
140 Ibid., 18-19.
141 Ibid, My New Order. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), 118.
Hitler viewed the English as a race of ruthless but efficient Nordic empire builders whom Germans—as their less than successful ‘racial cousins’—should endeavor to emulate on the continent of Europe. Within the pages of Mein Kampf, he admired and respected Great Britain’s conquering spirit, “Precisely in England one should have realized the striking refutation of this theory: no nation has more carefully prepared its economic conquest with the sword with greater brutality and defended it later on more ruthlessly than the British…England always possessed the armament that she needed. She always fought with the weapons that were required for success.” \(^{142}\)

But to successfully emulate the British imperial standard, Hitler wanted England as an ally and sought to secure her friendship. In a speech to the Reichstag on 21 May 1935 Hitler declared, “The German Government has the straightforward intention to find and maintain a relationship with the British people and State which will prevent for all time a repetition of the only struggle there has been between the two nations hitherto.” \(^{143}\) Even as late as 1938 within another speech to the Reichstag Hitler confessed, “Germany also has no quarrel with England apart from her colonial wishes. However, there is no cause for any conceivable conflict. The only thing that has poisoned and thus injured the common life of these two countries is the utterly unendurable press campaign which in these two countries has existed under the motto of ‘freedom of personal opinion’.” \(^{144}\) Hitler’s overtures and the diplomacy of the German Ambassador to Great Britain, Joachim von Ribbentrop, led to the signing of the Germano-British Naval Pact on 18 June 1935, although a meaningful and lasting amity with the British Empire eluded Nazi Germany. When it became apparent that a Germano-British alliance would not become a reality, Hitler reluctantly unleashed his propaganda machine against the nation and race of people whom he admired most of all.

The two Nazi leaders who orchestrated these attacks were Ribbentrop and Joseph Goebbels. As the new leader of the Deutsches Institut für außenpolitische Forschung (German Institute for Foreign Policy Research) Ribbentrop through literature aimed at an academic audience systematically attacked the British Empire on its foreign policy, its

\(^{142}\) Ibid, Mein Kampf, (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941, 189.
\(^{143}\) Ibid., 330.
\(^{144}\) Ibid., 440.
violations of international law and its history itself. Books printed in the English language such as *Britain’s Political Morality in Her Own Words* highlighted the hypocrisy between Britain’s Enlightenment ideals and her acts of military and economic imperialism abroad and social imperialism at home. In the German language; the historical series *Das britische Reich in der Weltpolitik* (The British Empire in World Politics) contained twenty-four volumes of unrelenting propaganda attacks upon the British record of colonial rule from Aden to Zanzibar, specifically designed to question and denigrate the moral right of the British metropolis to have an overseas empire at all.

Likewise Joseph Goebbels, the leader of the Propaganda Ministry, used literature targeting the German and European masses to explore the same subjects as Ribbentrop’s institute. Books such as *England ohne Maske* (Britain Unmasked) and *Das ist England: Weltherschaft durch Blut und Gold* (This is Britain: World Domination by Blood and Gold) exposed the recent and past atrocities of British imperial history for all to peruse. And though Germany was still in the early stages of its conquest of Central Europe, Nazi propaganda focused upon the British hypocrisy of attacking Germany as an expansionist power when the British themselves held sway over a fourth of the globe.

It would be interesting to know what single work or act of Germany could be construed by any unbiased mind as a belief in her right or destiny to rule the world. On the contrary, the amassing of the British Empire, and the wars of conquest that have been fought to gain it, are a standing monument to this very same belief on England’s part. The comparative smallness of Germany’s colonial possessions before the last war, and the very fact that, through the centuries, Germany has not even been a united nation are sufficient refutations of this baseless accusation of German claims to world hegemony.

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146 Ibid, 164.
What truly concerned the British metropolis were German propaganda efforts to undermine the loyalty of the colonizer and colonized throughout the British Empire. In February 1934 K.H. Pfeffer, the German Consul-General to Australia, and the Sydney branch of the *Auslandsorganisation* (Foreign Organization) (AO) launched a German-English dual language newspaper called *Die Brücke* (The Bridge). This weekly newspaper not only disseminated Nazi propaganda to both the Australian and German communities but also encouraged dissatisfaction with British rule.\(^{148}\) In spite of its seditious content, *Die Brücke* continued to circulate until the Australian government outlawed it with the advent of World War II in 1939.

In 1938 Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, leader of the *Abwehr* (Intelligence Service), was ordered by Adolph Hitler to smuggle a small shipment of weapons into the British mandate of Palestine to arm Arab insurgents against the local Jewish population and the British administration. “Thus, for a brief period in late 1938, a policy of limited German intervention in the Palestine conflict was undertaken, not to undermine and eliminate the British position in Palestine or to promote the cause of Arab independence, but simply to contribute to pressures which might dissuade Britain from intervening in Hitler’s plan to destroy Czechoslovakia.”\(^{149}\) The weapons never reached their intended destination because Neville Chamberlain’s appeasement at Munich temporarily resolved the Sudentenland Crisis before the arms could be delivered to the Arab insurgents.

On 14 September 1940 the Nazis sponsored an English language broadcast of an appeal by the Islam Association, the Arab Club and the Moslem Defence Committee of Palestine, to the Islamic World: “All Moslems of the world, especially Indian Moslems, should at this critical juncture refrain from giving money or support to the British, but Moslems of India and [the] whole world should utilize this opportunity to the fullest extent and make themselves free of the yoke of British Imperialism which presses so heavily upon them.”\(^{150}\) Though this appeal went unheeded and the possibility of a worldwide Islamic uprising was minimal at best, this propaganda attack and others

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similar to it brought some disquiet to the British metropolis about the loyalty of the colonized to the Crown.

Prior to World War II, the British metropolitan government allowed the nation’s newspapers such as *The Times, The Daily Mail* and *The Manchester Guardian* to counter such propaganda attacks. But as L.D. Gammans, MP for Hornsey University, noticed as late as July 1941, “Germany had spent about £50,000,000 a year on propaganda as a weapon of war, and no other of their weapons had yielded them anything like the same dividends. Our propaganda in neutral countries had been lacking in vigour, virility and vision.”

The rise of Nazi Germany as a direct challenge to British imperial rule prompted the British Parliament to develop an active and organized counterattack that would ensure the loyalty of its colonized elite and masses for the foreseeable future.

**Metropolitan Steps to Ensure Colonial Loyalty**

The first step the British metropolitan government took to ensure the loyalty of the colonized was the creation of an extra-governmental organization that could move beyond merely countering Nazi propaganda attacks on a point-by-point basis to promoting British cultural values and the British way of life to the world.

To this end, Reginald Leeper, head of the Foreign Office News Department, outlined in memoranda the goals and function of an unofficial committee that would satisfy the Foreign Office’s need to improve the image of British culture abroad. “Originally known as The British Committee for Relations with Other Countries, but soon to be designated as The British Council, this met for the first time on 5 December 1934. Its first task was clear enough, namely to take over the cultural commitment of the Foreign Office News Department.”

Initially its purpose was to distribute books and periodicals to fourteen European countries. Under the leadership of Lord Lloyd of Dolobran in 1937, the role, scope and function of the British Council expanded considerably. It began to establish libraries and institutes in both British colonies and foreign countries as requested by the Foreign Office. The British Council also tapped Lionel McColvin, Chief Librarian of Hampstead, to serve on its Books and Periodicals

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151 *The Times* (London), 4 July 1941.
Committee establishing a link to The Library Association as a source of consultation and recruitment. Later, “a Royal Charter was granted to the Council in 1940, which defined the Council’s aims as the promotion of a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom and the English language abroad and the development of closer cultural relations with other countries.”

In addition to its library function, the British Council also provided English-language instruction. It recruited British teachers to lecture in overseas universities and similar educational institutions as well as provided financial aid to support teaching positions. The British Council also engaged in establishing personal contacts throughout the Allied nations by arranging for people with similar academic, cultural or scientific backgrounds and interests to meet share and discuss the common problems of their respective fields. Another function of the British Council was its sponsorship of cultural activities such as artistic exhibitions, musical performances and dramatic productions. The British Council also invited international guests to visit, study and observe life in Great Britain and sponsored overseas students to enroll in British universities and other educational institutions.

However, the greatest challenge the British Council confronted during the pre-war and early years of World War II came from a genuine lack of awareness by outsiders as to the organization’s activities. During a Supply Committee Meeting for Diplomatic Services on 7 March 1939 Arthur Creech Jones, MP for Shipley, expressed,

Like the hon. Member who spoke last, I feel some doubt in regard to the work of the British Council. It may be that I am profoundly ignorant of that work or that I am a little skeptical, but I shall like to receive from the right hon. Gentleman the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a little more information about this body…As I have said, I am anxious to learn a little more about the British Council, because it seems to me that while

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everyone is prepared to eulogise it, we have been left in complete ignorance about its work.\footnote{Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 344 (1939), col. 1983-1984.}

Two years later, the British Council appeared once again for a renewal of its funding. Yet the very committee members tasked to vote on this matter knew no more about its operations than it did two years ago. As Eleanor Rathbone, MP for Combined English Universities, admitted on 18 February 1941, “My criticism of the British Council has always been as to why it is such a hush-hush body. Hon. Members have reproached the Council in a way that showed ignorance of its work…So far as I know, there is no widely circulated or easily accessible form of information which shows exactly, year by year, what the Council is doing, where it has been doing it, and how, and that is a very great pity.”\footnote{Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 369 (1941), col. 74.} By March of that year, the British Council was able to supply to both Parliament and the British public annual reports detailing its activities within and outside of the metropolis. When Gilbert Gledhill, MP for Halifax, asked R.A.B. Butler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to render an account of the total staff, size, and grant fund from the Exchequer and other revenue sources available to the British Council Butler replied, “The Council’s staff in the country consists of 46 senior and 122 junior officers. Abroad, there are eight administrative officers and 157 officers acting as directors of Institutes and teachers of English…In the current fiscal year the amount of grant from Exchequer funds is £497,000. Other sources of revenue available to the Council consist of an anonymous donation of £15,000, other donations amounting to £1,000 and banking interest amounting to £300.”\footnote{Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5\textsuperscript{th} ser., vol. 370 (1941), col. 290.}

At the start of the war, the British Council only had two representatives abroad yet by the end of the conflict, the organization had thirty one representatives and established a hundred Council Institutes in Allied and neutral countries. Though the British Council became an unheralded wartime success in the metropolis and abroad, some of its greatest contributions to library development originated with its work in the colonies of the British Empire. On the other hand, library development in the British metropolis proceeded along a different track.

A Continuation of a Steady Decline

Sixteen years after the establishment of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust in 1913 and ten years after the passage of the Public Libraries Act of 1919, the full impact of public library development and subscription library decline was being felt in the British metropolis. In 1900 the number of subscription libraries that were active in England stood at 44 yet by 1950 that number had dropped to 15 in all. As much as one can cite the attraction of public libraries as a free alternative to subscription libraries as a reason for the latter’s decline, there were also larger factors at work between 1929 and 1945.

For example, the Bradford Library and Literary Society completed an overhaul of its collection and public services by 1929. However, the Great Depression was partly to blame for the library’s financial hardships as it helped rob the library of most of its subscribers who by 1935 numbered under 450. The other half of its financial problem resided in the fact that the library rented space as a form of revenue and a significant portion of the property went vacant from 1931 to 1937. Other subscription libraries were less fortunate in surviving the economic hardships of the period. In order to stay

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financially afloat, the Nottingham Subscription Library discarded 2,500 ‘old fashioned’ books and sold some of their older book-stocks to Sotheran’s for over £500 in 1926.\textsuperscript{162}

For the London Library, World War II had an extremely deleterious impact. “The massive and diverse appetite for books and reading, during and after the war of 1939-1945, affected the London Library, as so many similar institutions. At any rate, it emerged from the war in 1945 with depleted and well-worn stocks, and a long waiting list for its membership.”\textsuperscript{163} On the other hand, the Liverpool Library was forced to close its doors in 1942 when competition from commercial circulating libraries and the heavy bombing of the \textit{Luftwaffe} drove its membership from the city.\textsuperscript{164} While not every subscription library was experiencing the impact of the Great Depression and World War II in the same way, subscription librarianship in the British metropolis was continuing its steady decline both in number and influence with the British reading public when World War II ended in 1945. However this steady decline in British metropolitan subscription librarianship bore little reflection on an expanding colonial subscription librarianship which confronted its own set of unique challenges which will be explored in the following chapter.

\textbf{A Question of Loyalty}

Returning to the issue of the colonized elite and masses’ loyalty to the Crown, a perception of colonial disloyalty existed within the British metropolis for two reasons: the toll constant Nazi propaganda attacks took on the morale of the British from 1933 onward and the rise of indigenous elite reform movements which were perceived to be direct threats to British colonial rule. In the former case, it is possible that Nazi propaganda did have a deleterious effect on the morale of the British metropolis by compelling them to not only question the loyalty of the colonized elite and masses but also lionize moments when the colonized elite and masses relieved their fears and demonstrated their loyalty to the British Empire. For example, this need for reassurance could have manifested itself when after the British Council sponsored a visit to England by a delegation of West


\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Liverpool Daily Post}, 6 April 1942.
African newspaper editors, the organization advertised in *The Times* that it received a telegram from their former guests on 11 September 1943, “Press delegation wish to express to British Council heartfelt thanks for hospitality so cheerfully demonstrated to make [our] tour pleasant. Delegation trust [that] bonds [of] friendship forged will bind closer not only delegates and British Council but also bring West Africa and Britain closer.”

Or Terence Irvine, a British visitor to the island of Jamaica, may have expressed his personal relief about the loyalty of the indigenous masses after observing their contributions to The Jamaica War Fund,

> They [the indigenous masses] mostly have large families and unemployment is rife. Under such conditions greater patriotism must be hard to find than that shown by the particulars contained in this cutting, from which an extract akin to the following can be taken—Keziah Roberts, 1s. 3d.; Thos. Sergeant, 1s. 0d.; Zacca, 2s. 0d.…Richmond Hill Sunday School, £1 10s. 0d., &c., &c. And what an answer to German propagandists who have so much to say about our administration in our Colonies!

It is difficult to measure the psychological impact that Nazi propaganda may have had upon the British people before and during World War II. The Nazis did not have to convert the entire British metropolis to National Socialism for their propaganda attacks to be effective. Signs of national disunity, increases in Anti-Semitism, a rise in anti-American sentiment, or a growing fear of a Bolshevist threat could have been regarded by the Germans as a small victory.

A similar sustained propaganda attack on the historical record of the British Empire could have led the British metropolis to not only question the loyalty of its colonized subjects but also express and extol relief over public displays of imperial loyalty that clearly disproved Nazi propaganda.

Another source of disquiet for the British metropolis was the rise of indigenous reform movements throughout the colonies of the British Empire. It must be noted that from the 1920s to the mid-1940s, these indigenous reform movements had not developed

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165 *The Times* (London), 11 September 1943.
166 Ibid, 17 January 1940.
into the nationalist movements that would call for independence from Great Britain in the aftermath of World War II. Indigenous elite reform movements such as the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) (Singapore Malay Union), the People’s National Party (PNP) of Jamaica and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) sought equitability and justice from the colonial and metropolitan governments in the provision of employment, living wages, civil liberties, human rights and social welfare. These movements were viewed as subversive because they challenged the colonial status quo with reforms designed to compel the British to live up to its ideal of trusteeship.

In the aftermath of World War I, the British Empire adopted a colonial policy which permitted them to retain both their League of Nations mandates and their colonies as a trust. The British government would improve the living standards of its colonial subjects; extract the raw materials from the territories they governed and utilize the territories themselves as markets for the manufactured goods they produced while guiding the colonized towards political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency.¹⁶⁸

While the origins, functions and roles of these reform movements will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter, there is no evidence to suggest that prior to the end of World War II these groups were plotting to overthrow the Nigerian, Malaysian and Jamaican colonial governments. Neither is there any evidence to clearly indicate that the Nazis encouraged and armed these reform movements to agitate against British colonial rule. The perception of possible disloyalty held by the British metropolis with regards to these reform movements was misplaced but not unwarranted considering the atmosphere of doubt and fear generated by the Nazi propaganda machine. The full impact of these propaganda attacks upon the morale of the British metropolis is not known. What is known is that Nazi propaganda employed arguments of hypocrisy and atrocity in an attempt to turn British citizens against British subjects, the colonizer elite against the indigenous elite and the European non-elite against the indigenous masses throughout the British Empire.

**The Colonial Development & Welfare Act of 1940**

Even with the passage of CDA 1929 and the economic development grants-in-aid it provided to those British colonial governments that applied for them, the British metropolis voiced two opinions on the issue of colonial development. One view called for an expansion of colonial development beyond what already existed by ensuring the development of the natural resources of the British colonies for the common good—colonizer and colonized alike.\(^{169}\)

An opposing view advocated that CDA 1929 and the changes it wrought were sufficient in meeting the metropolitan government’s expectations on colonial development.

Political reports from many colonies show that…the directors of agriculture, public health, and education, as well as administrative officers, are now collaborating in the execution of programmes of social and economic development; this enhances improvements in cultivation and marketing, social conservation, and other economic measures as well as village improvement, housing, water supply, sanitation, and other social services…Some of the recent criticism of our colonial administration have been made without due regard to limiting factors and to developments…\(^{170}\)

This unofficial debate was only a prelude to an official debate and larger events which would shape colonial development within the following ten years.

Partly as an act of defiance against Nazi aggression as the *Wehrmacht* sliced through Belgium and reached the English Channel during the first full year of World War II and partly to appease the colonized during the conflict and ensure their loyalty, the British Minister of Health, Malcolm MacDonald, brought before the House of Commons a Colonial Development and Welfare Bill whose “object under this legislation is to develop the Colonies so that as far as possible they became self-supporting units.”\(^{171}\)

While this legislation was designed to serve as an important initiative for the future

\(^{169}\) *The Times*, 17 August 1936.

\(^{170}\) Ibid, 12 July 1938.

\(^{171}\) *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5\(^{th}\) ser., vol. 361 (1940), col. 47. It must be noted that as both a rule and a tradition *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates* do not record the first reading of a bill.
economic self-sufficiency of the British colonies, the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill served as an attempt to complete the work that CDA 1929 started eleven years earlier.

As MacDonald admitted during the presentation of his Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, “Those who are familiar with the Debates of 1929 will remember that even then the primary purpose of our legislation was not to help colonial development for its own sake, but in order to stimulate that development mostly to bring additional works to idle hands in this country. It was derived as part of our scheme to solve our unemployment problem.”172 The Minister of Health exhorted that the legislation for which he sought passage not only addressed the shortcomings of its predecessor “but it also covers everything which ministers to the physical, mental or moral development of the colonial peoples of whom we are the trustees.”173

In spite of the noble intentions of his bill, MacDonald acknowledged that due to their present conflict against the Axis Powers some material and labor for development projects would be redirected towards the war effort and that the proposed annual sum allocated to the bill—£500,000 a year for colonial research and £5,000,000 a year for colonial development and welfare—would not be completely spent.174 Still, the Minister of Health believed that the passage of the bill would mark a significant turning point in the history of colonial development in the British Empire from a policy of imperial economic development to a policy of imperial social development which would ultimately lead to the economic self-sufficiency of the British colonies. While the debate over the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill was both colorful and heated, the verbal exchange between the Members of Parliament revealed much about their sentiments both in favor of and in opposition to the British Empire’s continued path from its long-standing policy of laissez-faire colonial development.

During the bill’s Second Reading, Arthur Creech Jones, MP for Shipley, supported the bill because he believed it addressed the educational needs of the colonies, “That Colony of which we are so proud, Nigeria, has not been able to make any advance or new developments in its educational work over a number of years because of the

172 Ibid, col. 45.
173 Ibid., col. 47.
174 Ibid., col. 46.
absence of money.” Ernest Evans, MP for The University of Wales, echoed both the sentiments of the Minister of Health and MP Jones, “I was very glad to find that the new Fund may be employed for such purposes as agriculture, education and health…There is nothing more appalling than the inadequacy of the facilities for education, health and housing in many of our Colonies at the present time…It can be made to do a great deal of good, and I welcome it for that reason.”

On the other hand, the voices of dissent expressed a variety of reasons for opposing passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1940. Colonel Josiah Wedgewood, MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, offered a pragmatic argument in opposition to the bill,

I think we must see the world as it is to-day, and realize that the actual proposals in this Bill cannot be carried out…We must take advantage of the widespread character of our Empire and use these Colonies as places where we can continue to get food, munitions, small arms, shells and even planes…This sum of £5,000,000 should be invested in factories, in developing the production of engineering goods and the production of foodstuffs.

Campbell Stephen, MP for Glasgow, Camalchie, opposed the bill because he believed little could be gained from it based upon British colonial development in the past. Citing the underdevelopment of education, the living standards of the colonized masses and the systematic destruction or co-optation of any indigenous opposition to British colonial rule, Stephen believed the bill could not create positive social and economic improvements in the British colonies.

In spite of this opposition, a near consensus emerged throughout the House of Commons not only in favor of the bill but also supporting the primacy of the development of vocational education. This support was crucial because it had the potential to address library development as a smaller part of educational development within the colonies of The British Empire. For example, Captain Alan Graham, MP for

175 Ibid., col. 60.
176 Ibid., col. 68.
177 Ibid., col. 76-77, 79.
178 Ibid., col. 94.
Wirral, though a supporter of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill reminded the House of Commons that it was concentrating too much on non-technical education and not nearly enough on technical education which he believed was better suited for the colonized masses and the overall welfare of their communities.\(^{179}\) And Dr. Haden Guest, MP for North Islington, observed that for Nigeria MacDonald advocated allocations for technical instructors who could not only help agriculturalists increase their crop yields but also improve the overall quality of life in the colony.\(^{180}\) Of the sixteen MPs who debated the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1940 during its Second Reading nearly half of them either addressed the educational component of the bill or specifically assessed the importance of colonial vocational education.

After the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill passed its Second Reading in The House of Commons and was presented to the House of Lords on 20 March 1940. The membership of that chamber resoundingly echoed the House of Commons’ endorsement of vocational education. Viscount Swinton professed that while teaching the colonized masses to increase their crop yields or improve their standard of living was desirable he hoped the overall emphasis on colonial educational development was a vocational one.\(^{181}\) Viscount Bledisloe desired to see the allocations of this bill devoted to technical education and agreed with Viscount Swinton that vocational education was too important to be overlooked.\(^{182}\) Similar to The House of Commons, of the eleven Lords who debated the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, over half of them addressed the educational component of the bill or specifically supported the primacy of vocational education in the colonies.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 (CDWA 1940) received the Royal Assent on 17 July 1940. The aim of CDWA 1940 was two-fold: support the economic and social development of the British territories within the Sterling Area and correct the shortcomings of CDA 1929. The Sterling Area was a group of countries and British territories which were largely dependent on the British market, executed most of their trade in the British pound sterling, fixed their own currencies in relation to the

\(^{179}\) Ibid., col. 87.
\(^{180}\) Ibid., col. 96.
\(^{181}\) Ibid., col. 980.
\(^{182}\) Ibid., col. 988.
pound, and held some or all of their reserves in sterling.\textsuperscript{183} The Sterling Area was created in 1931 after Great Britain abandoned the Gold Standard. It shielded Great Britain against the worst effects of the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the worldwide economic depression which followed. The Sterling Area also encouraged imports and discouraged exports between Britain and the rest of the world. These imports raised real wages and living standards in the British metropolis; however, the use of sterling to build reserves rather than to purchase goods from Britain deepened the unemployment crisis in the severely depressed export areas.\textsuperscript{184} This trade-generated unemployment inevitably served as one of the chief causes in the rise of indigenous reform movements throughout the colonies of the British Empire. However, this was not the only shortcoming of the Sterling Area.

While the Sterling Area economically protected Great Britain and allowed the metropolis to maintain a respectable share of the world trade during the 1930s, the Sterling Area was neither big enough nor influential enough to cure the worldwide economic depression.\textsuperscript{185} The Sterling Area also failed to solve two of Britain’s fundamental foreign trade problems which plagued the metropolis since the end of World War I: low demand for uncompetitive, old-fashioned labor-intensive British exports and a continuing lack of international competitiveness for the newer British industries. As Michael Dintenfass noted in \textit{The Decline of Industrial Britain 1870-1980}, “Britain’s problem, evidently is not that it has misallocated the land, labor and capital available to it. It is that it has failed to employ these resources as productively as other economies in performing the same mix of economic activities.”\textsuperscript{186}

The role of CDWA 1940 in supporting the British territories of the Sterling Area was to increase their economic worth to the metropolis as centers of export for raw materials and their economic viability to the metropolis as centers of import for

\textsuperscript{184} P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins. \textit{British Imperialism 1688-2000}. Second Edition. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001: 470. It must be noted that the countries that comprised the Sterling Area were Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Portugal, Iraq, Egypt and Thailand. The British Empire aspect of the Sterling Area was comprised of all British colonies yet excluded Canada and British Honduras.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid, 478.
manufactured goods. By economically and socially developing these colonies and maintaining the economic integrity of the Sterling Area, the metropolitan government believed that it could reduce high unemployment levels in Britain which in December 1939 stood at 9.1 percent and increase the economic productivity of the indigenous masses within the colonies.\textsuperscript{187} As the \textit{Statement of Policy on Colonial Development and Welfare} for CDWA 1940 stipulated,

The first emphasis in this much enlarged policy of Colonial development will be on the improvement of the economic position of the Colonies. That is the primary requirement, upon which advance in other directions is largely consequential. It is by economic development that Colonies will be placed in a position to devote their resources, to the maximum extent possible, to the provision of those Governments and other services which the interests of their people demand.\textsuperscript{188}

With regards to the shortcomings of CDA 1929, the Act suffered from two fundamental flaws: a narrow interpretation of the concept of ‘development’ by the CDAC and restrictions on the amount of financial assistance CDA 1929 could provide. The CDAC adopted and implemented a narrow interpretation of the concept of ‘development’ which did not include education as a project to be funded under the tenets of CDA 1929. Funding for colonial education was still remanded to the colonial governments and Christian missionary groups. While the Colonial Office expressed an interest in removing this ban on educational funding, the CDAC maintained the ban until CDWA 1940 achieved Royal Assent and superseded CDA 1929.

The second shortcoming, the restrictions on the amount of financial assistance CDA 1929 provided for colonial development, was not imposed by CDAC but inherent within the economic structure of the colonies themselves. “Assistance had been designed to take the form either of grants or loans made directly towards the cost of a specific project, or of grants or loans to assist a Colonial Government in defraying the interest

payable during the first ten years, or less, on a loan raised by the Government.”¹⁸⁹ The dilemma was that most colonial governments were heavily in debt and saw little reason to add to their debt burden when they were uncertain about their ability to repay the debt they currently possessed.

Though the CDF was allocated £1 million a year for colonial development, most colonies sought funding for minor projects which in themselves were not always fully financed. For example, from 1929 to 1939 the colony of Nigeria requested £1,023,929 for eleven different development projects under CDA 1929 yet they received only £325,453 in grants. The Straits Settlements Government during the same period requested £17,250 for only two development projects yet received from the CDAC only £8,625. Jamaica from 1929 to 1939 requested £930,039 for twenty-four projects which were approved by the CDAC (the committee rejected eleven of them) yet only received £152,329.¹⁹⁰ The source of these shortfalls resided within the metropolitan government’s inconsistent financing of the CDF. “The committee, it seemed, worked on the assumption that the maximum figure of £1 million would be available each year for financing its recommendations. In fact, though, apart from the two financial years of 1935/6 and 1936/7 (when the figure rose to £900,000) annual payments into the Colonial Development Fund averaged less than half the maximum figure allowed by the Act.”¹⁹¹ Due to these persistent funding shortfalls, the CDAC was largely incapable of fully funding most colonial development projects.

CDWA 1940 was able to correct the shortcomings of CDA 1929 by enlarging the scope of colonial development to include any purpose likely to promote the development of the resources of any colony and the welfare of its peoples which covered all social and welfare services yet enabled aid to be provided towards financing recurrent charges.¹⁹² To eliminate the shortfalls in funding projects, CDWA 1940 authorized the remission of

approximately £11 million owed by colonial governments in respect of outstanding loans and decoupled the expenditure for colonial development from the domestic economic interests of Great Britain. CDWA 1940 created the Colonial Development and Welfare Advisory Committee (CDWAC) to review applications for assistance. It also allowed colonial development not only to expand beyond the economic arena and into the social and welfare sections of the colonies but also it provided a clean slate for all future colonial development.

With the Battle of Britain well under way during the Act’s passage and five more years of unrestricted warfare, capital goods shortages and food rationing awaiting the besieged island nation, the funds of CDWA 1940 were allocated on a limited basis. In the colony of Nigeria, CDWA 1940’s education allotments amounted to £50,700 for the creation of a Veterinary Training School and £9,000 for the appointment of two Mission advisers on education. In the colony of Jamaica, CDWA 1940’s education allotments were considerably larger than its Nigerian counterpart: £50,000 were allocated to books and stationery for public elementary schools, £9,600 were funneled to play centers for children below school age, £7,500 were earmarked for the development of four boys’ and one girls’ rural practical training centers, £3,150 were used to purchase the services of two supervisors of physical training, £850 were utilized as an enquiry into systems of secondary education and £655 were allocated to improvements in the education system for the Turks and Caicos Islands. Due to its occupation by the Japanese military from 1941 to 1945, no education allotments were distributed to the colony of Malaysia.

Back in the war-torn British metropolis, the Parliamentary debate surrounding CDWA 1940 and the impact of the Act itself in the colonies sparked an ongoing debate in unofficial channels about the future of education in the British colonies. In early 1943, within a letter to the editor to The Times, Dr. Daryll Forde of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, believed that in the coming post-war environment a direct link needed to be established between British universities and those which resided within the colonies and that this link “would

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195 Ibid., 10.
involve comprehensive study of the educational and other needs of the colonies, direct
collaboration with their educational and other authorities in developing schemes of
special training and general education.” In response to Forde’s letter, other scholars
explored the development of higher education in the British colonies from a myriad of
vantage points.

For example, Dr. Julian Huxley of The Athenaeum wrote, “I was glad to see
Professor Forde’s letter in your issue of to-day; but I would like to go even farther than
he does and look at the steps he proposes as part of a wider plan—nothing less than the
provision of a unified system of higher education and research for the whole British
Commonwealth.” Margery Perham, a Reader in Colonial Administration in the
University of Oxford, offered, “This is the need, if the purposes stated in all these letters
are to be achieved, for greater provision for colonial studies in our leading
universities…What is required…is a few more lectureships which would at first be
mainly concerned with research.” While Sir Richard Windstedt, Chairman of the
Royal Central Asian Society, believed that the recruitment of teachers for service in the
colonies and an improvement of their working conditions—a rotational tenure of three to
six years—would prove beneficial to education in general in the British colonies, Nigel
St. J. Groom of Magdalene College argued that the source of colonizer-colonized
misunderstandings were home-grown, “What is required is a training which will give a
wide knowledge of general affairs in the colonies, to be a basis for all candidates for the
Colonial Service…Such a college through which all desiring to enter the Colonial Service
might pass, would serve not only to give a necessary knowledge of general colonial
matters but also too some sense of unity, both as between colony and colony; and in the
policy which the Colonial Service as a whole pursued.”

There are two issues which are important about these letters to the editor: First,
the authors not only recognized a need to improve vocational and liberal arts education in
the British colonies but also envisioned a need to improve the education of the British
people about the affairs of the colonies as well. These scholars viewed education as a

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196 The Times (London), 28 January 1943.
197 Ibid., 30 January 1943.
198 Ibid., 3 February 1943.
199 Sir Richard Winstedt and Nigel St. J. Groom’s editorials are located within the same page and issue of
The Times (London), 6 February 1943.
dual engagement between several parties—academe and the public, the colonizer and the colonized, and academe and the government—which could lead to a greater level of understanding on the challenges and problems which confronted both the British and the indigenous peoples throughout the British Empire. Second, none of these scholars expressed a primacy of vocational education over a liberal arts education in the British colonies. They envisioned colonial universities much as they viewed their own— institutions which were either heavily biased towards a liberal arts education or established a balance between vocational and liberal arts education. As Eric Ashby in *Universities: British, Indian, African* observed, “Those who had time to reflect on universities were concerned about the rival virtues of general education and specialized professional training; about the nurture of the humanities in a world where academic éclat had passed from the classicist to the physicist.”

While this scholarly vantage point was relegated to academe and the pages of *The Times*, these editorials reveal that on the issue of colonial education British scholars were not in lockstep with the British government. As Charles Peter Emudong in “The Gold Coast Nationalist Reaction to the Controversy over Higher Education in Anglophone West Africa and its Impact on Decision Making in the Colonial Office, 1945-47” noted during the early 1940s the new members of the Colonial Office’s Advisory Committee on Education challenged the resistance of colonial governors to a university system in the colonies, and made plans to create an imperial university system modeled after the British academic system. One leader of this new movement, H.J. Channon, Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Liverpool, “vehemently attacked the colonial governors’ opposition to the idea, arguing that though the colonial universities might breed nationalist agitators, it was better to begin breeding them in time to better control them for future use after the inevitable withdrawal of direct British rule from the colonies.”

In spite of these fundamental differences over educational policy, CDWA 1940 served as the first mandate for comprehensive colonial development to address the

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educational needs of the indigenous populace throughout the British Empire. Though CDWA 1940 showed promise by correcting the failings of its predecessor CDA 1929, five more years would have to pass before a new colonial development and welfare bill would receive the Royal Assent and meet the full expectations of its framers once it was enacted.

**Metropolis Taking Military Steps**

On 7 December 1941 the British colony of Malaysia was attacked by the Japanese military who punctuated their invasion with the sinking of the British battleships *HMS Repulse* and *HMS Prince of Wales* three days later. In a three month campaign which lasted from their initial landing on Kelantan until the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the Japanese swept aside the organized resistance of the British, Australian, Chinese and Malaysians. The Allied survivors of the Japanese juggernaut reorganized themselves into the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), resorted to guerilla warfare in the jungles of Malaysia and relentlessly harassed the Japanese occupation force from 1942 until 1945.\(^{202}\)

In the British metropolis, the fall of Malaysia sent shockwaves of anger and recrimination throughout official and unofficial channels. A day after the Japanese invaded the Unfederated Malay State of Johore, Eric Macfadyen, the former Chairman of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, lamented, “In court and kampong and in the pasars of the little towns the word has gone round that the flag is no longer hoisted on the Residency flagstaff; and men’s hearts will be bewildered at the sudden collapse of their tower of strength.”\(^{203}\) Three months later Malcolm Watson, Director of the Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, sought neither to place blame nor seek recrimination but called for civility and fairness in all future assessments of the Malaysian debacle.

The loss of Malaya has been followed by statements so unjust to the Malays, to the Civil Service and to the rubber planters, and so detrimental to British prestige that they should not be allowed to stand uncontradicted.

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\(^{203}\) *The Times* (London), 17 January 1942.
[sic]...In blaming the British in Malaya for that for which they were not responsible, and failing to give them credit for the good they have done, the critics, in my opinion, do grave disservice to the Empire.²⁰⁴

Even as late as September bitter assessments on the loss of Malaysia to the Japanese Empire continued to be voiced. Aubrey Wallich, a former Chairman of the Federated Malay States Chamber of Commerce, argued “Malaya was not lost because the European community was decadent and frivolous; but from military inadequacy due to our having disarmed while others were arming and not having a balanced force of all arms available for its defence when needed.”²⁰⁵ As much as the loss of Malaysia and some of its other Far Eastern colonies wounded the prestige of the British in the Southeast Asia, it also appeared to increase their resolve to defend and protect their remaining colonial holdings in Africa and the Caribbean.

With regards to the colony of Nigeria, “the spread of the war to North Africa, the Middle East, and India enhanced the strategic value of Nigeria, which became an important station for troops and supplies bound for these theaters of war.”²⁰⁶ Airports, bases, hospitals and roads were constructed in the urban centers of the colony to accommodate the movement and stationing of Allied manpower and war material. This increase in development activity not only enhanced British control over Nigeria until the end of the war but also spearheaded employment, expanded urbanization and improved the economy of Nigeria.

In the colony of Jamaica, the British metropolis relied upon its Exchange of Destroyers for Air and Naval Base Agreement with the United States to protect and defend its colonial holding. Signed on 2 September 1940 between the British Ambassador to the United States, the Marquess of Lothian, and the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, this agreement transferred American control over fifty of its destroyers to the British Royal Navy in exchange for rent-free, ninety-year leases of military bases in Newfoundland, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Antigua, British

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 7 April 1942.
²⁰⁵ Ibid, 12 September 1942.
Guiana and Jamaica.\footnote{207 Henry Steele Commager (ed.) \textit{Documents of American History}. 5th Edition, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948, 624-625.} Though the threat of a Nazi attack beyond U-boats preying on Allied shipping in the Caribbean Sea was minimal, the stationing of American troops throughout the British metropolis’ Caribbean and Atlantic possessions along with British and Canadian garrisons ensured that fifth columnists would be hard pressed to engage in acts of sabotage and that the debacle of Malaysia would not be repeated.

From the start of World War I to the end of World War II, the British metropolis underwent a series of institutional shifts which moved the Colonial Office from endorsing a policy of laissez-faire colonial development to supporting a hands-on policy of colonial development. The post-war denationalization of British agriculture and industry, a rise in unemployment and the advent of The Great Depression introduced economic hardships which British parliamentarians turned to the colonies to solve by passing CDA 1929 and creating the Sterling Area. Weimar propaganda and Nazi subversion compelled the British metropolis to abandon its ban on government-sponsored propaganda and create the British Council to improve the international image of the British Empire. While the fall of the Malaysia to the Japanese Empire during World War II forced the British metropolis to enlist its colonized masses to defend the rest of its empire. And with the passage of CDWA 1940 and the military treaties the British signed with the United States and other Allied Nations, the British Empire began to economically and socially develop its colonies not only to guide them towards economic self-sufficiency but also to ensure their loyalty during and after World War II. In the end, these institutional shifts would lay the foundation for many of the political, social and economic changes that would befall the British Empire in the post-war world. Now that an assessment of the institutional shifts in the British metropolis has been concluded, an examination of the impact of these shifts in the colonies themselves must be conducted during the period of subscription library co-optation.
CHAPTER 3
SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY CO-OPTATION (1929-1945)

The period of subscription library co-optation witnessed the British metropolitan and colonial governments confronting four socio-economic factors which compelled them to not only liberalize their governments but also institute economic, social and cultural reforms to appease the demands of the colonized elite. These socio-economic factors were the colonized elite reaching a point of occupational saturation within the colonial bureaucracy; the global rise of anti-imperialism; the creation of the Sterling Area and the rise of indigenous reform movements dedicated to economic, social and cultural change.

With regards to the occupational saturation point of the indigenous elite, the emphasis the British metropolitan and colonial governments placed on the dissemination of Macaulayism made a noticeable impact upon the racial and ethnic composition of the colonial bureaucracies. The small but growing level of dependency the British Empire placed upon the colonized elite prior to 1929 blossomed into a complete dependency upon this group to operate its colonial bureaucracies throughout Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Tables 3, 4, & 5 reveal that in reading-intensive occupations by race and ethnicity for Malaysia, Jamaica and Nigeria from 1929 to 1945 the colonial bureaucracies level of dependency upon the colonized elite had risen to a point of complete indispensability. Clerks, teachers and lawyers of non-European racial and ethnic backgrounds greatly outnumbered those of European and mixed European descent.
Table 3: Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Penang in 1931\textsuperscript{208}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>Malays</th>
<th>Immigrant Malaysians</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Eurasians</th>
<th>Other Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4702</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1137</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5328</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Jamaica in 1943\textsuperscript{209}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>White n.o.s.</th>
<th>British Isles</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>East Indian</th>
<th>Syrian</th>
<th>Other Race Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>1649</td>
<td>3223</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3669</td>
<td>4548</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Reading-Intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for the Southern Provinces of Nigeria in 1931\textsuperscript{210}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>Native &amp; Native Foreigners</th>
<th>British Empire</th>
<th>Austrian</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Swiss</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>3,511</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4,260</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>6,843</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,614</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{208} C.A. Vlieland. \textit{British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census and on Certain Problems of Vital Statistics}. London: The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1932, 258, 260-261, 265, 268, 272, 275-276, 279. It must be denoted that the population tabulation for lawyers was comprised from the category of barristers and solicitors while the population tabulation for clerks includes office assistants, typists and draughtsmen.


\textsuperscript{210} H.B. Cox. \textit{Census of Nigeria, 1931 Vol. III: Census of the Southern Provinces}. London: The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1932, 17, 30, 39. It must be noted that the Nigerian census data for lawyers are the actual totals for the larger category of miscellaneous professions; the population tabulation for clerks is the actual total for the larger category of native administration and government and the census data for teachers are the actual totals for the larger category of education. This table displays the occupational information for the southern provinces of Nigeria excluding Lagos because occupational information for Lagos was not obtained by British census takers.
And these numbers revealed a point of occupational saturation had been reached in which official policy and unofficial calls were made for some within these reading-intensive professions to switch to other occupations. In Malaysia, Mr. Abdoulkader, the President of the All-Malaya India Conference noted, “This pretext of giving first preference to the locally born children is, I presume, to slam the door on the face of Indian born children, which I think is ridiculous…The present excuse of granting first preference to the local born children is to check the onrush of the present demand for education from all communities residing in British Malaya.”

It can also be argued that this policy was an attempt by colonial governments of the Straits Settlements, Federated and Unfederated Malay States to stem the onrush of indigenous elite students into heavily saturated reading-intensive occupations by eliminating the problem at the source.

In Nigeria, an anonymous contributor to The Nigerian Pioneer known only as Aesculapius observed, “As the clerical branch of work is becoming overfull, young people leaving school begin now to focus their attention into different lines of work—a great encouragement indeed.” For Aesculapius, the over 3,500 indigenous elites who served as clerks throughout the southern provinces of Nigeria may have left other occupations understaffed and thus a change was warranted. While in Jamaica, Amy Beckford Bailey, a Jamaican instructor at the Kingston Technical School during the 1930s “was aware of the prejudice which existed against technical schools and in favour of grammar schools. She noted that grammar school graduates from Wolmer’s College, Jamaica College and St. George’s College, to name a few schools, were preferred for posts in the civil service and private enterprise, despite the high standards of work at technical schools.”

All of these measures by the colonial governments reveal a deliberate attempt to control the number of new applicants to three occupationally saturated colonial bureaucracies. While the colonized elite were needed to operate a bureaucracy whose duty, role and function were expanding due to the implementation of CDA 1929, CDWA 1940 and CDWA 1945 it became increasingly difficult for the colonial governments to

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211 The Indian Pioneer (Kuala Lumpur), 3 January 1930.
212 The Nigerian Pioneer (Lagos), 17 March 1933.
ignore the indigenous elite when some among their number organized themselves into reform movements. One of the socio-economic conditions which gave added voice to these reform movements was the rise of anti-imperialism.

The Anti-Imperialist Challenge

The second challenge the British metropolitan and colonial governments confronted was the rise of global anti-imperialism in the aftermath of World War I. Anti-imperialist sentiment had existed for as long as imperialism itself. Anti-imperialism also historically manifested itself in a myriad of forms—protests, rallies, resistance movements and propaganda to name a few among several. The interwar period marked a unique moment in which anti-imperialist leaders, publications and movements both in the developed and the developing world concentrated their attacks upon the British Empire and its policies of colonial rule.

For example, in the United States, Richard F. Pettigrew, U.S. Senator from South Dakota, in 1922 delivered a speech entitled ‘Imperial Washington’ which attacked the League of Nations role as an international organization dedicated to preserving the peace of the world. In his view, the role of the League of Nations was to safeguard the British Empire.

These things [the British Empire and its League of Nations mandates] are granted under the Treaty [of Versailles], and Article X of the Covenant [of the League of Nations] provides that: ‘The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve against external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League.’ This clause commits all members of the League to back the British Empire in its efforts to hold hundreds of millions of human beings in subjection.214

In China, Chen Gongbo, Comrade-in-Charge of the Zhongguo Guomindang gaizu tongzhi hui (Association of the Chinese Guomindang Reorganization Comrades) declared within his text Guomindang suo daibiao di shi shenmo? (What Does the Guomindang

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Represent?) that China had become an international colony which had lost all of its financial, territorial and judicial sovereignty to the British Empire, the Japanese Empire and the other colonial empires of Europe. Chen considered the loss of China’s financial sovereignty to be the greatest of the three because it consigned successive Chinese governments to a financial state of dependence upon foreign loans from Europe.215

Ironically, even in the Empire of Japan, the British Empire received stiff criticism for its foreign policy. The influential foreign relations journal, Gaiko Jiho (Diplomatic Review) in 1938 espoused “that Britain’s foreign policy in the twenty years since the First World War stood on two major principles: the playing off of one barbarian against another, and the suppression of newly rising peoples…A British-style outlook on the world and British-style racial attitudes dominate the entire world.”216

While in the British metropolis itself, Harry Pollitt, leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain from the late 1920s to the early 1940s, adopted the stance that Great Britain was not committed to imperialism as an accident of history but that it was tightly woven into the concept of imperialism to the point that it epitomized it. Pollitt also adopted the Leninist platform on imperialism as the last stage of capitalism in which colonial labor would be exploited and surplus capital would be exported to the colonies.217 These individuals, publications, and other anti-imperialist organizations such as The America First Committee in the United States, The Theosophical Society in Great Britain, The League against Imperialism in Belgium and The Communist International in the Soviet Union attempted to challenge British imperialism by agitating against it, aiding indigenous reform movements throughout the British colonies, exposing the political, economic, social and military excesses of the British Empire and speaking out against British imperialism in general. The net effect of these anti-imperialist campaigns was best described by Bernard Porter in The Lion’s Share,

There was more talk of the rights of non-Europeans, as well as of their protection; doubts about the morality of even the kindest and best-intentioned paternalism; doubts, long-standing but bolstered most recently by the war [World War I], as to whether Europeans, who had just perpetrated such an atrocity among themselves, had any cause to regard themselves as superior in any way to those they were supposed to be ‘raising’ to their level.  

This lingering doubt was little helped by the third challenge the British metropolitan and colonial governments confronted—the worldwide economic depression of the 1930s and the impact of the Sterling Area upon British colonial export production.

The Great Depression and The Sterling Area

In Chapter 2 of this study, the impact of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the metropolitan government’s response to that crisis—the creation of the Sterling Area—were explored. It was determined that the Sterling Area proved beneficial to Great Britain because it provided cheaper imports which raised real wages and the standard of living yet reduced the metropolis’ dependency upon exports. This decreased demand for exports coupled with the worldwide economic depression led to spiraling levels of unemployment throughout the colonies of the British Empire. And these high levels of unemployment led to riots, strikes, and agitation among the indigenous masses against the colonized elite.

In the colony of Jamaica, a violent strike over depressed wages and poor working conditions erupted at the Frome Estate of the West Indies Sugar Company in May 1938 and served as a catalyst for a series of strikes and riots which occurred throughout the island. Within the colony of Nigeria, a railway strike over menial wages in 1931 crippled overland transportation and compelled the colonial government to come to terms with the strikers and their demand for better compensation. While in the colony of Malaysia, large-scale strikes and riots which could have crippled the colony were averted.

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by forward-thinking colonial leaders in the Asian colonies of the British, Dutch and French Empires.

Rubber and tin were the major exports throughout these Asian colonies. Colonial leaders reasoned that if they could control the supply of these exports they could artificially control the price and ameliorate the negative impact of the Great Depression and the Sterling Area upon their colonies’ economies. In 1934 the colonial governments of Malaysia, Ceylon, the Dutch East Indies, Indo-China and Siam agreed to impose restrictions on rubber production, curtail the expansion of existing acreage, and establish a fixed export quota for each colony. These restrictions lead to an increase in rubber prices from M$0.20 a pound in 1935 to M$0.43 a pound in 1937. In 1931 Malaysia, Bolivia, the Dutch East Indies, Ceylon, Indo-China, Siam and Nigeria agreed on restrictions for tin production which successfully raised the price of tin from M$1,020 per ton in 1932 to M$1,815 a ton in 1935. These production controls not only helped stabilize the price of these exports but also increased wages, stabilized the colonial economies and reduced both the scale and severity of economically related incidents of civil unrest. Yet economic problems were merely one facet of the indigenous elite and masses discontent with colonial rule. There were social problems such as racism, poverty and injustice which gave rise to indigenous reform movements.

The Advent of Indigenous Reform Movements

The fourth challenge the British metropolitan and colonial governments faced was the rise of indigenous reform movements dedicated not to independence but to a reformation of the colonial bureaucracy through the promotion of equal opportunity, social justice and economic development. The three leading groups that would emerge to challenge both the British metropolitan and colonial governments during the interwar years were the People’s National Party (PNP) of Jamaica, the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) (Singapore Malay Union) of Malaysia, and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP).

The PNP was established in 1938 and organized by Norman Manley, a Jamaican lawyer. The People’s National Party agitated through protests, strikes and rallies to achieve their goals of universal suffrage, social, political and economic reform, and the establishment of a census. The agitations of the PNP and its allies proved so effective that by January 1944 negotiations between the PNP and the colonial government yielded Jamaica a new constitution which not only met some of the demands of the PNP but also put the island colony on the path of self-government and eventual independence.

The KMS was established in 1926 and organized by Inche Muhammad Euros Abdullah, a Malay editor to the Utusan Melayu (Singapore Free Press), Tunku Abdul Kadir, a Malay member of the Municipal Council, and Inche Embok Suloh, a Malay Justice of the Peace. The KMS also encouraged the economic, political and administrative interests of the Malays; urged Malays towards social and economic self-improvement; voiced the concerns of the Malays to the colonial government and fostered Malay interest in higher education. It also sought to achieve its goals through non-violent protests and often petitioned the colonial government for redress of its grievances. The agitations of this organization and other Malaysian reform movements culminated with the creation of the Conference of Pan-Malayan Malay Associations on 6 August 1939. This conference marked a major step towards national solidarity among the Malay people.

The NNDP was established in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, a Nigerian land inspector. The party’s platform was opposition to forced labor, to land appropriation by the colonial government, to the maintenance of plantation estates, and to the imposition of harsh laws. It advocated the establishment of municipal self-government for Lagos, universal compulsory education, the creation of a West African court of appeal, and the Africanization of the upper echelon of the civil service. Like the PNP and KMS, the NNDP agitated through protests, strikes and rallies yet petitioned the colonial government on behalf of its supporters. By commanding the support of an occupationally diverse popular base, the NNDP was able to win all of the elective seats in the Lagos

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224 Ibid, 196.
Town Council from 1925 to 1938. It also swept all of Lagos’ seats in the Legislative Council during the elections of 1923, 1928, 1933 and 1943. These electoral victories—however small—allowed the NNDP and those Nigerians who supported it to have a voice in the management of their colony.

While all of these organizations strived for social, economic and political reforms in their respective colonies, none of them advocated complete independence from Great Britain. The aforementioned reforms within the British colonies and colonial development policy changes within the British metropolis also continued to have an impact upon the development of colonial subscription librarianship during this period. Subscription libraries among other cultural institutions, were co-opted and utilized by the colonial governments to placate the cultural and social demands of these reform movements. The only exception to this rule was the Penang Library which since 1880 was being utilized by the Straits Settlements government to satisfy the literacy needs of the indigenous elite.

**The Penang Library (1929-1945)**

From 1929 to 1941 the Penang Library enjoyed a period of prosperity and growth within its funding, collection development, competition and membership. In 1935 the library received an increase in its Straits Settlements government grants from M$3,500 a year to M$4,000 a year. The total number of its subscribers grew from 600 in 1935 to 621 in 1937 to 670 in 1939. The library’s collection also blossomed from 537 volumes added in 1935 to 617 volumes added in 1937 to 591 volumes added in 1939. The Penang Library’s competition also grew in number as well. Though the Raffles Library in Singapore had existed since 1823, the Malacca Library since 1881, and the Kuala Lumpur Book Club since 1896 two new libraries emerged to challenge the Penang

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Also, the leadership and membership of the Penang Library were undergoing considerable change. In 1817 the founders and first committee of management for the Penang Library were British men of great financial and political standing in the Straits Settlements community. By 1935 the leadership of the Penang Library was no less prestigious but more racially and ethnically diverse than its nineteenth century progenitor. While the President of the Penang Library was the former Secretary for Chinese Affairs in the Malayan Civil Service, the Honorable Arthur Mitchell Goodman, he was aided in his duties by Colin King, a British reverend and Headmaster of the \textit{Bukit Mertajam} High School prior to World War II; Ong Chong Keng, a Chinese doctor; Rai Sahib B.R. Sharma, an Indian official who resided in Georgetown and served as the Honorary Treasurer of the Penang Library and C.R. Samuel, Esquire who served as the Honorary Librarian of the Penang Library to name a few among others.\footnote{Penang Library. \textit{Penang Library: Report of Committee of Management. 1935.} Georgetown: Penang Library, 1936, 1.} With such a diverse leadership and overall island population, it is quite conceivable that a sizable minority of the Penang Library’s membership was as equally diverse.

Though the library’s collections were only in the English language and catered to the reading habits and information needs of the indigenous elite, other alternatives did exist by which subscribers could find reading materials published in indigenous languages. Walter Buchler, a British traveler reported on a visit to Malaysia that “In all the cities of Malaya reading rooms, organized by the Chinese, are to be found. But few English books or periodicals are to be seen there, as these reading rooms are intended to maintain the people’s interest in things Chinese and what books there are usually deal with Chinese literature on the Classics.”\footnote{Walter Buchler. “The Malaysian Reading Public.” \textit{British Malaya}, 7 (August 1932): 90.} Even though these reading rooms, subscription library and public library alternatives existed and competed with each other for government funding, the Penang Library was financially solvent and faced a promising future until the Japanese invaded Malaysia in 1941.
On 11 December 1941, the Japanese bombed the island of Penang scattering most of the residents of the island’s provincial capital Georgetown into the surrounding countryside. When the Japanese entered the city they looted the Penang Library’s collection yet left behind enough reading materials so that Rai Sahib Sharma and Dr. Keng could assume the roles of Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Librarian respectively and reopen the Penang Library once the Japanese consolidated their hold over the island. By charging a subscription fee of M$0.50 for Class A subscribers, M$0.25 for Class B subscribers and M$0.10 for Juvenile subscribers, the Penang Library not only attracted an Asian membership of over a thousand subscribers but also remained open until June 1944. At that time, the Japanese procurator ordered the Penang Library to be converted into his office, dismantled the library’s shelving and removed its entire collection to the Supreme Court Building.\(^{230}\)

Though the library was closed, the wrath of the Japanese occupation was also borne by the Penang Library’s leadership. While Keng survived the occupation; Samuel was captured, imprisoned and died within a Japanese internment camp and Sharma was murdered by the Japanese in 1945.\(^ {231}\) The British regained control of Malaysia a few weeks after the official surrender of Japan on 2 September 1945, but the future of the Penang Library appeared as uncertain as it had been promising on the eve of World War II.

### The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica (1929-1945)

From 1929 to 1934 the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica reached its zenith of influence in the social and cultural life of the island. The Jamaican legislature passed the Institute of Jamaica Law, 1930 which consolidated the Institute of Jamaica Law, 1879; the Institute of Jamaica Law, 1879 Amendment Law 1889; and the Institute of Jamaica Law 1879, Amendment Law 1909 into a single official document.\(^ {232}\) In 1931 Alpheus Hyatt Verrill, an American archaeologist visited the island of Jamaica and gave...

\(^{230}\) Class A subscribers are those who can borrow four books at a time, Class B subscribers are those who can borrow two books at a time and Juvenile subscribers are those who are children and/or under parental supervision. The information from this website was derived from Penang Library, Annual Report, 1945. 2-5 and reprinted by the Penang Public Library Corporation, Brief History of the Penang Library. Online. Available from http://www.penanglib.gov.my/sejarahpulaupinang.jsp. Accessed May 3, 2008.


a very favorable report of the Institute of Jamaica, “But the most noteworthy building in Kingston, from the viewpoint of most visitors, is unquestionably the Institute of Jamaica in East Street. The Institute...is the real treasure house of Jamaica, combining as it does a museum, or library and collection of antiquities, old manuscripts, rare books and historical objects.”

And by 1930 the General Library boasted a collection of over 29,000 volumes, a total of 26 institutions gained access to the library’s collection through the Institute of Jamaica Law, Amendment 1909; an additional 11 society groups annually paid £1 5 shillings to enjoy borrowing and book box privileges; the library’s subscription fee rose to a £1 deposit for three months and an additional two shillings for the privilege to borrow two books and one magazine; and its annual grant from the Jamaican government rose to £3,400.

The library also boasted an increase in the size of its membership. In June 1930 there were 9 honorary members, 32 complimentary members, 22 corresponding members, 13 life members, 994 subsidiary members and 1,580 free members enrolled under the Institute of Jamaica Law, Amendment 1909, making a total of 2,650 with 26 depositors to the Library and 348 Juvenile borrowers in the Free Lending Department, making a grand total of 3,024. Four years later, there were 5 honorary members, 35 complimentary members, 20 corresponding members, 11 life members, 1,242 subsidiary members and 1,912 free members enrolled under Law 3 of 1909, with a total of 3,225 plus 26 depositors to the library and 89 Juvenile borrowers in the Free Lending Department, the membership rose to a grand total of 3,340. This was the General Library’s highest membership figures up to that moment in time. By 1935 the Institute of Jamaica confronted three challenges which called into question its effectiveness as an island-wide library service. These challenges were the Carnegie Grants of 1935, the Manchester Free Library of 1938 and the Bateson Plan of 1945.

235 Ibid, 168.
The Carnegie Grants of 1935

The first challenge the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica confronted ironically emerged from the library’s attempt to create a rival institution to its own—a public library. On 15 August 1935 the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica Herbert G. deLisser sought a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) to construct what would have been the first public library in Jamaica but Dr. F.P. Keppel, the Secretary for CCNY, denied the grant request on the grounds that his institution was no longer funding public library development.237

When Keppel cited that one of the reasons for the denial of the grant was a discrepancy between the enrollment membership of the Institute of Jamaica and the number of persons who actually borrowed books, deLisser may have considered it a personal attack on his character and on 11 September 1935 responded forcefully by letter. “The number of members who take out books in any year, or in any period of time from any public library, will always be less than the number of that institution’s membership; and to quote a total figure of the ‘borrowers’ of one institution, and leave them half off the membership of another, can give no correct idea of the usefulness and standing of either.”238 The Chairman did not cease with this analytical retort. He further described the role of the book-box scheme, the Teacher’s Library and the total size of the Institute’s membership. Then deLisser added his own misgivings over the proposal he had so recently submitted, “I may add that I am somewhat at a loss to understand how the establishing of a Free Library in Kingston could fail to destroy to a considerable extent the usefulness of the Institute of Jamaica.”239 In the end deLisser implored Keppel to consider funding a small book collection instead of an entire library and closed his letter at that point.

Two days later, Keppel received another letter on behalf of the Institute from Sir Edward Denham, the Governor of Jamaica, who gave a backhanded apology to Keppel for deLisser’s terse remarks, “I rather thought the Corporation would feel that Jamaica

237 Herbert G. deLisser to The Secretary, The Carnegie Corporation of New York, F.P. Keppel, 11 September 1935. This and all other letters cited in this chapter are, unless otherwise stated, from the file entitled Series III. Grants III.A. Grant files, ca. 1911-1988. Box 188 Folder 11 Jamaica, Institute of, 1934-1948.
was not properly appreciative of Mr. Carnegie’s work in establishing free Libraries if Jamaica is the only big British Colony without one! I quite appreciate the position however and realize that you can’t help us.”

From that point, Denham revealed to Keppel the purpose, design and function of the Institute of Jamaica as a subscription library.

It will never however be, as it is at present constituted, a free Library in the sense that such can be made accessible to the poor man. Though the subscription is only five shillings a year, the Library is only open to the respectably dressed—which covers a multitude of clothes—the Tie and Collar Brigade—and does not offend the facilities which I desire to give to men of the unemployed type who take a real interest in reading; there are many such.

As an alternative measure, Denham proposed that a small library of 2,000 books be attached to the Institute of Jamaica which would be free to anyone who satisfied a single criterion—patrons had to have a letter of recommendation from a prominent member of the community or a member of the Institute of Jamaica itself. Denham concluded his new grant request and waited for a reply which came a week later. On 26 September 1935, Keppel agreed to Denham’s terms but not before he passed the governor’s letter onto Ernest A. Savage, a former visitor to the island of Jamaica.

Ernest A. Savage was the Honorary Secretary of the Library Association of Great Britain and a Librarian in the Edinburgh Public Libraries system when he was asked and funded by the CCNY to conduct a library survey of the entire Caribbean. Traveling by car, foot, boat and seaplane, Savage not only visited Jamaica but also Bermuda, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, the American Virgin Islands and all of the other British colonial possessions in the Caribbean Sea in 1934. After publishing his findings and returning to Scotland, Savage was called upon by Keppel to give his personal assessment of Denham’s latest request for library-related funding. In a damning letter of indictment Savage cut to the core of Jamaica’s dearth of public librarianship and its stagnation in subscription librarianship.

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240 Edward Denham to F.P. Keppel, 13 September 1935.
My trouble in Jamaica was that I found the Institute authorities...were quite out of sympathy with the needs and desires of the ordinary people of the island. Their teaching library service had been almost discontinued and anyway it was rather a sham. I could see no chance of breaking down the ‘class’ wall which restricted the use of the Institute to about 3,169 people out of over a million inhabitants. The Governor and Members of the Institute were afraid that if they made a free library of it the leading people of the island would cease to use it...the best course that the Government can take is this:

(1) Convert the Institute into a state or government reference library and museum; wholly supported by the Government and open to all the inhabitants who are likely to profit by it...

(2) Erect a public library for popular readers something like that in Barbados; also free.

This is the course that I should have recommended had I been given an opportunity of discussing proposals with sympathetic people.243

Attaching Savage’s letter onto his response, Keppel waited until the day after Christmas to positively respond to Denham’s grant request. On 19 February 1936 Denham responded by thanking Keppel for the grant and almost adopted a conciliatory tone as it pertained to Savage’s letter and the future of the Institute of Jamaica. On Savage’s letter, the Governor of Jamaica taciturnly conceded, “It is interesting, helpful and also stimulating. Mr. Savage thoroughly gauged the position here.”244

On the future of the Institute of Jamaica, Denham was more verbose, “Once we have got this nucleus [of books] I hope it may be possible to develop it locally into a more ‘popular’ Library than the Institute is to-day. I think we must work out for ourselves the future of the Institute in which there is a good deal of public interest being raised at present.”245 After a few months delay in receiving the aid, The Daily Gleaner happily reported on 14 November 1936, “The Carnegie Corporation are due a great deal

243 Ernest A. Savage to F.P. Keppel, 12 December 1935.
244 Edward Denham to F.P. Keppel, 19 February 1936.
245 Ibid, 19 February 1936.
of thanks from the Jamaican public. From New York they have sent £1,000 in order that the Jamaica Institute may purchase more books.”

While the immediate challenge was for the Institute of Jamaica to receive funding to build a public library and then later to receive funding for a collection of books, the Denham-Keppel correspondence exposed a larger ongoing struggle among the British and indigenous elite as well as the European non-elite and indigenous masses. The nature of this struggle was the reconciliation of the Institute of Jamaica’s public declaration to act as a cultural institution for all Jamaicans when it charged a prohibitively high subscription fee that limited its patronage to less than one percent of the population. Neither The Teacher’s Library nor the book-box scheme was enough to convince anyone outside the colony that the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was meeting the literacy needs of the Jamaican people as a whole. And it was this shortcoming of the subscription library which led to the second challenge it faced and its reaction to that challenge.

The Manchester Free Library of 1938

On 4 May 1936 a sub-committee handpicked by the Governor of Jamaica performed an exhaustive survey of the public services of the Institute of Jamaica and published their findings. Within its memorandum, S.R. Braithwaite, a British lawyer, and representative of the committee stopped short of calling for the library’s subscription fees to be replaced by funding from the municipal government. “The Committee offers for consideration the suggestion that the Council of the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation should vote annually a sum of say five hundred pounds towards the purposes of the Institute...It is the Committee’s earnest hope that the Government will see its way to supply the remaining deficit from General Revenue.”

While this suggestion was ignored by the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica, the demands of a single Welsh Presbyterian Minister a year later could not be ignored and would ignite an explosion of public library development in Jamaica.

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246 The Daily Gleaner (Kingston), 11 November 1936.
247 Ibid, 4 May 1936.
In 1937 Reverend Walter Lewis arrived at the town of Mandeville in his assigned parish of Manchester. Looking beyond meeting the spiritual needs of his parishioners and more towards their educational needs, he declared,

Jamaica should keep pace with the rest of the world. In every little town and village throughout England and America there are free libraries serving people who could better afford to buy books than the people of Jamaica. These free libraries have been the most important factors in the spread of culture and production of a well informed peasantry—for free libraries are the logical corollary of free education, there must be a continuity of reading after school age. Public opinion must be stabbed alive to this need.248

To achieve this end, Reverend Lewis published a pamphlet entitled *A Plea for a Manchester ‘Free’ Library* which he circulated throughout his parish. He courted the support of the Custos of Manchester Parish, the Honorable Thomas Anderson, Governor Denham, and other notables among the British and indigenous elite. Reverend Lewis also rallied the support of the Jamaican masses of Manchester Parish to his cause of building, stocking and maintaining Jamaica’s first public library.249 On 30 April 1938 the Manchester Free Library opened its doors to the public and by the following year it had achieved what no library before or since had accomplished in Jamaican history. The Manchester Free Library survived its first year of existence purely on donations from friends of the library and the labor of volunteers.

The library originally started with 700 adult and 200 junior books cataloged for the convenience of its readers. “A number of these books were donated by friends and well-wishers in England, Scotland and America. Local gifts included valuable private collections from John McClure Hamilton an English Historian, Professor Pickering, [a] Harvard Astronomer, Mrs. Ann Pickering—all residents of Mandeville and Mr. T. Sharp

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Solicitor of Christiana. A valuable West Indian collection was built up from the books donated by the older residents of the Parish.”

The editors of *The London Times Weekly, The Daily Gleaner, The Jamaica Standard* and every major newspaper on the island donated current issues of their newspapers free of charge; the building which housed the library was donated by the Manchester Parochial Board; the repair and binding of damaged books was a service volunteered by the West Indian Training College; free postage for the exchange of books was provided by the Jamaican government; lighting was installed free of charge through the courtesy of a local electrician; and donations as large as 100 guineas from Dr. G. Hargreaves, a British resident of Mandeville, to as small as a pence from Mandeville locals were used to maintain the facility and purchase more reading materials. By April 1939 the success of the Manchester Free Library so impressed the local parochial board that they allocated an annual grant of £50 to its continued operation. Yet this was not the end of the aid the library would receive.

Under the leadership of Hugh Paget, the British Council’s first Representative in Jamaica, a Council Institute was established in Kingston in 1942. For the next two years, the British Council provided shipments of books and periodicals to stock and re-stock the shelves of the Manchester Free Library. In 1942 the colonial government of Jamaica itself matched the parochial board’s grant of £50 and in subsequent years increased this allocation to £100. And in 1944 the British Council hired both a trained cataloger, Mrs. Henry Ogle, and a professional librarian, Mrs. Hofman Bang, to supervise the development of the library.

What role did the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica play in the development of the Manchester Free Library? How did they view this possible competition for their services to the public? “The Institute of Jamaica gave valuable

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251 The information in this paragraph was derived from the following sources: *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston), 21 April 1938; Ibid, 14 June 1938; Ibid, 13 October 1938; Ibid, 14 November 1938 and Ibid, 18 July 1939.
advice on the operation of the library and assisted with loans of books.”\textsuperscript{254} The reason for this limited response may have been reluctance by the Board of Governors to commit a large amount of its resources to the Manchester Free Library because it was probably unsure as to whether or not it would survive its initial year of existence. On the other hand, the Board of Governors may have experienced some social pressure to contribute to the maintenance of this one free library because everyone else was making contributions as well.

With regards to the Board of Governors’ view of Jamaica’s first public library, it can be argued that the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica welcomed the creation of the Manchester Free Library as a social distraction that would divert the attention of the European non-elite and indigenous masses away from converting the General Library into a public library. It also would allow the colonizer and colonized elite to enjoy their subscription library in peace. Within the British Council and the birth of Jamaican public librarianship came the third and final challenge to the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica which ended the General Library’s sovereignty.

\textbf{The Bateson Plan of 1945}

Long before Hugh Paget convinced the Board of Governors to seek Colonial Office grant funding through CDWA 1940 to finance Nora Bateson’s library survey of Jamaica, public library development on the island was advancing at a fairly rapid pace. The Portland Free Library was established in 1942, the St. Elizabeth Public Library and St. James Public Library were both founded in 1944 and plans were made for public library construction in the parishes of St. Ann, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, Trelawny and Westmoreland.\textsuperscript{255} But before these new libraries could come into existence there was a desire and a need to not only coordinate these public library systems but also discover the areas of need that remained within the island of Jamaica.

At the invitation of the Government of Jamaica, Miss Nora Bateson, Director of Libraries in Nova Scotia, was invited to undertake this work. She arrived in the island on 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1944 and left on the 11\textsuperscript{th} February.

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1945. During her stay in Jamaica she examined the existing libraries in the island, including the Institute of Jamaica, the Manchester Free Library in Mandeville, the Portland Free Library in Port Antonio and the libraries being formed in Montego Bay and Black River. She consulted with Clerks of the Parochial Boards, officials of organizations in the fields of Education and Social Welfare, and saw as much of their work in rural areas as possible.\textsuperscript{256}

When she completed her survey and reported her findings to both the British Council and the Institute of Jamaica she did so in a comprehensive report entitled \textit{Library Plan for Jamaica}. Within her report, Bateson recommended that the island should be considered as a whole library unit and that a centralized library service with branches throughout Jamaica should be established. She advocated an increase in the book stock of existing libraries and the construction of genuine library buildings.

Pertaining to the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica, Bateson recommended a series of measures which would curtail both their power and authority. Bateson recommended as part of a seven year public library development plan the transfer of the General Library from the Institute’s Board of Governors to a new island library board where it would act as the nucleus of a Kingston branch of a new island-wide library service. She recommended the creation of advisory parish library boards to guide parochial library development. Bateson also suggested the creation of a smaller board to exclusively focus on library development and relegated the larger Board of Governors to matters exclusively dealing with the Institute of Jamaica. While Bateson conceded that the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica would be represented on the new island library board, she also recommended the entire Board of Governors no longer be nominated by the Governor of Jamaica but selected by an advisory library board for the Parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew.\textsuperscript{257}

The Bateson Plan may have caught the Board of Governors completely off their guard. It is unlikely they anticipated the transformation of the General Library into a


public library for Kingston and St. Andrew Parish. It is equally unlikely that they wanted a smaller board of governors to strip them of their library development role and relegate them to the management of the Institute of Jamaica. It even might have come as a complete shock to them to discover that under the Bateson Plan their ranks would no longer be selected by the Governor of Jamaica but by a local library board. Perhaps the reaction of the Board of Governors and the Jamaican government was to openly advocate the implementation of the Bateson Plan yet delay its enactment. By selecting those provisions of the plan it desired from those which did not support the perceived best interests of their patrons, the Board of Governors and the Jamaican Parliament may have contributed to the four year delay between the publication of Library Plan for Jamaica in 1945 and the passage of the Jamaica Library Service Act of 1949 which implemented some of the recommendations of the Bateson Plan.

By the end of 1945, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica survived the greatest challenges that it would confront in the twentieth century yet it did not survive these challenges unscathed. The first challenge it faced compelled the Board of Governors to confront a social chasm which separated the Institute of Jamaica from its ideal of acting as a cultural center for all Jamaicans and its reality of serving as a social nexus for an elite few. The second challenge forced the Board of Governors to acknowledge that the ideal of the General Library was no longer solely its own but this challenge may have lulled them into a false sense of security. Though it heartily endorsed and actively helped the Manchester Free Library and its sister institutions, the Board of Governors may have been content with the fact that the rise of public libraries would meet the literacy needs of the European non-elite and indigenous masses while the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica would continue to serve the information and entertainment needs of the British and indigenous elite. Public calls for the General Library to drop its subscription fees would cease and everyone would get what they wanted.

While this did happen, it was a grave miscalculation by the Board of Governors to possibly assume that the status quo would continue. Because the third challenge it confronted may have completely caught them unawares, shattered their expectations of continued institutional sovereignty and forced them into a four year seclusion where they
wrestled with the amendments advocated by the Bateson Plan. These fundamental changes the Board of Governors confronted were similar in many ways to the changes that the Lagos Library in the British colony of Nigeria would confront during its short history.

**The Lagos Library (1932-1945)**

The origins of the Lagos Library can be traced back to the Lagos Book Club of the early 1920s. Created by Sir Alan Burns, a British civil servant, who believed that a subscription library was needed in Lagos yet failed to persuade Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria, that library development was deserving of government support; Burns started the Lagos Book Club with meetings convened in his house, a limited membership and a few books obtained on an annual basis.\(^{258}\) Though the Lagos Book Club enjoyed a modicum of success, Burns believed that the European community in Lagos needed a proper library where they could gather, collect and satisfy their reading needs at their leisure. In 1924 Burns was transferred to the Bahamas until he was reassigned to Nigeria as the Deputy Chief Secretary of the colony in 1929.\(^{259}\)

Upon his return Burns renewed his quest to establish a subscription library in Nigeria and enlisted his brother, C. Delisle Burns, who resided in Great Britain to contact CCNY on his behalf. C. Delisle Burns did contact Keppel about his brother’s desire to build a library in Lagos and Keppel subsequently established contact with Sir Alan Burns. In a letter to Burns, Keppel informed him about CCNY’s policy on African library development. “However I ought to add that the present policy of the Corporation appears to be to complete or to carry on the existing programs in South Africa and East Africa before turning to other parts of the Empire.”\(^{260}\) In a response to Keppel’s letter, Burns expressed his hopes, trepidations and reasons for establishing a subscription library in Lagos. First he provided a general population assessment of Lagos and then he posed a racial argument for creating not one subscription library but two within the city.

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\(^{260}\) F.P Keppel to Sir Alan C. Burns, 4 March 1929. This and all other letters cited in this chapter are, unless otherwise stated, from the file entitled Series III. Grants III.A. Grant files, ca. 1911-1988. Box 274 Folder 4 Nigeria-Library Development, 1929-1936.
If however, the library was open to both races, I am afraid that neither would patronize it, the whites because they would not allow their wives to read in the library side by side with black men or borrow books which had been borrowed and kept in native houses, and the blacks because the whites did not use the library. These reasons may seem ridiculous, and I am not attempting to condone them, but it would be folly to ignore their existence or to think that centuries of prejudice could be overcome with ease…There is a very small section of the Negro population that could or would use any library, but I consider that this section, which must increase, even if slowly, should be catered to. I am therefore forced to the conclusion that two libraries are necessary for Lagos.\textsuperscript{261}

Moving beyond the need for establishing two racially segregated libraries in Nigeria, Burns argued for their need to be subscription libraries, “As regards the upkeep and maintenance of the library, I am confident that this could be met by subscriptions from those using it, and probably, from Government grants.”\textsuperscript{262} Though Burns admitted that his request was directly opposed to the public library building mission of the CCNY, he pleaded for an exception to be made in his case. “I believe that all libraries started by your Corporation are free; if that is so, I suggest that in Lagos some exception shall be made to your rule. The whites would gladly pay and the Negroes should be made to pay, if even a trifle, as they will not value what they get for nothing.”\textsuperscript{263} Once his request was submitted, Keppel repeated CCNY’s African policy, “In my judgment, nothing would be lost by postponing the question of libraries for Natives till we have had a chance to observe the success of the experimental grants that have recently been noted in South Africa.”\textsuperscript{264}

Aside from a private meeting which took place between the two men in June 1931, this matter was largely on hiatus until January 1932 when Burns attempted to meet the CCNY halfway with respect to his request for two subscription libraries in Nigeria. First, Burns indicated the extent to which he had the support of the colonial governor of

\textsuperscript{261} Sir Alan C. Burns to F.P. Keppel, 7 May 1929.  
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid, 7 May 1929.  
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid, 7 May 1929.  
\textsuperscript{264} F.P. Keppel to Sir Alan C. Burns, 7 January 1930.
Nigeria, Sir David Cameron, “The Governor is in sympathy with the scheme and we shall be able to secure a suitable building from the Government, on hire, to house the library.”

Second, Burns indicated that he was going to gather an initial collection of books that would serve as the nucleus for the Lagos Library. “We are going to appeal to the European residents in Nigeria to pool their own collections of books in the library, and we feel that we can count on about 1,000 volumes from this source.” And third, Burns made no further request for two racially-segregated libraries.

It is not known as to why Burns changed his mind on this matter. Did his meeting with Keppel in June 1931 have an impact on his thinking? Or did he come to believe that his chances of acquiring a grant for one library were far better than getting funding for two libraries? What is known is that Keppel made an exception for Burns and approved a grant of $6,000 for a Nigerian library development program on 27 May 1932. By 29 September 1932 the Lagos Library quietly opened its doors for membership. As The Nigerian Daily Times reported, “Although there was no formal or official opening, his Excellency the officer administering the government…were among the numerous persons who paid a visit to the library of which his Excellency the Governor is one of the governing members.”

The initial trustees and members of the Lagos Library committee were some of the wealthiest and powerful men in the colony of Nigeria. Sir Kitoyi Ajasa, a Nigerian solicitor and barrister-at-law; Sir Alan C. Burns and L.M. Herapath, a British businessman were the first trustees of the library. The first elected committee members of the Lagos Library were Sir Alan C. Burns as its Chairman; Henry Carr, a Nigerian administrator; E.J.R. Hussey, the British Director of Education in Nigeria; J.N. Panes, a leading member of the Nigerian Field Society; Captain John Calder Wood, a British surveyor; Gwilliam Iwan Jones, a Colonial Office administrative officer who was appointed Honorary Secretary and Treasurer for The Lagos Library; R.M. Williams, a

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265 Sir Alan C. Burns to F.P. Keppel, 18 January 1930.
266 Ibid, 18 January 1930.
267 F.P. Keppel to the Crown Agents for the Colonies, 27 May 1932.
268 The Nigerian Daily Times (Lagos), 1932 September 1932.
senior staff member of the United Africa Company Limited, and A.L. Darrell as the last committee member. J.A. Martins served as the Chief Librarian.\textsuperscript{269}

Housed on Moloney Street near the heart of the colonial government’s offices, the Lagos Library rented its facility for £48 a year. The library was designed to achieve two goals: to entertain the reading interests of the European community dwelling in Lagos and throughout Nigeria and to generate interest among the indigenous elite in reading for leisure as opposed to reading for employment. To achieve these ends, the Lagos Library established a high subscription fee to attract the patrons it wanted and developed a collection reflective of patron demands. In terms of a subscription fee, the Lagos Library charged an entrance fee of £1 and a subscription of 2 shillings and 6 pence a month for those who resided within Lagos. Members of the Lagos Book Club were admitted and excluded from paying the entrance fee because their material and financial contributions to the collection of the Lagos Book Club served as the nucleus to the collection of the Lagos Library.\textsuperscript{270}

In the first quarter of its existence, the Lagos Library addressed the entertainment needs of its European and Nigerian patrons by stocking the library with a predominantly fiction based collection. In 1932 the Lagos Library only had 1,365 books on fiction with history, biography and travel books as the next highest in number at only 750 in stock. Yet the borrowing pattern of its patrons reflected the need for such a weighted collection. In September 1932 46 books of fiction were borrowed yet by October this number exploded to 607 books and climbed again to 790 in November before it declined slowly to just 731 books in December. Books on history, biography and travel displayed a similar pattern of interest with 23 books borrowed in September ballooning to 276 in October and then declining to 265 in November and 223 books in December.\textsuperscript{271}

In an effort to extend their services beyond Lagos and to the other European communities throughout Nigeria, the Lagos Library established sub-libraries where a supply of books could be sent each month and the books issued the previous month returned to the main library. In 1933, the Lagos Library established three sub-libraries in

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid, 1.
\textsuperscript{271} Ibid, 2.
the towns of Abeokuta, Burutu and Enugu. By 1935 the Lagos Library established nine sub-libraries in the towns of Burutu, Ife, Warri, Apapa, Enugu, Ikot-Ekpene, Zaria, New Calabar and Ilorin.\(^{272}\)

Though the library clearly catered to the British and indigenous elite, it still provided a free reading room for the European non-elite and indigenous masses though its reading materials were usually worn, discarded, un-cataloged and unorganized. Though Burns was transferred from Nigeria in 1934 to become the Governor of the colony of British Honduras, the membership of the Lagos Library began to flourish. In 1933 the Lagos Library reported that its membership increased from 164 members in 1932 to 297 of which 24 were Africans. By 1935 the Lagos Library reported that its membership had risen from 396 members of which 39 were Africans to 481 subscribers of which 43 were Africans.\(^{273}\)

When the Lagos Library opened in 1932 it was hailed by some as a noteworthy achievement. \textit{The Nigerian Pioneer} extolled, “The establishment and opening of the Lagos Library has supplied a long felt want…It is meet that the second Lagos Library should have been due to the continuing energy and application of an official of the Government of Nigeria in the person of our esteemed and able friend Mr. A.C. Burns…The Lagos Library stands to-day a testimonial to the memory of this gifted Officer.”\(^{274}\) And \textit{The Nigerian Daily Times} offered,

The opening on Thursday last of the Lagos Library finishes yet another work of progress in the capitol of Nigeria…At a time when efforts are being made to keep the public well informed; to provide intellectual food for those who need it an atmosphere free from hustle and bustle of every day life, the Lagos Library has not come a moment too soon and those who made its foundation possible are sincerely to be congratulated…Mr.


\(^{274}\) \textit{The Nigerian Pioneer} (Lagos), 30 September 1932.
A.C. Burns and all those who are associated with him as trustees of the Library deserve the best wishes of the community.275

However, the opening of the Lagos Library also drew considerable criticism from not only the colonized elite but also from the colonizer elite as well. An editorial in the newspaper *West Africa* observed, “The new books will supplement those of the old Lagos Book Club, taken over by the new library, and the subscription will be 2s. 6d. monthly, with an entrance fee of £1 (a sum which will, however, put membership beyond the reach of most of the literate community in Lagos).”276 Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, a leader within the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) “had been very critical of the Lagos library service, as highly discriminatory: a reminder of the racist practices he had experienced in the United States.”277 The attack from the colonizer elite neither came immediately nor from the pen of a newspaper editor but from a library survey report conducted seven years after the Lagos Library opened.

**The Wrong-Vischer Report of 1939**

In 1939 the CCNY funded a regional library survey of British West Africa led by Margaret Wrong, Secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, and Hanns Vischer, the Joint Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies. “The survey report indicted the British lack of interest in library matters in Nigeria, and noted that in 1939, of the 152 subscribers to the Lagos Library only seven were Africans and 145 were Europeans.”278 Though the Wrong-Vischer Report recommended a Carnegie grant be given to the government of Nigeria for public library development as opposed to further subscription library development, the Lagos Library of Nigeria largely succeeded in meeting the entertainment and information needs of its patrons.

Armed with this recommendation, the CCNY allocated grants of £15,590 for public library development in Nigeria and the Gold Coast. When the CCNY presented the findings of the Wrong-Vischer Report and grant allocations to the Colonial Office,
the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, informed the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the Carnegie Corporation had made allocations for public library development in Nigeria and to make plans to put the funding to good use. “On April 12, 1940 the colonial Governor Sir Bourdillon wrote to the British colonial secretary in London, informing him that ‘the Carnegie funds had little practical value. African reading interests were considered to be limited and to be too closely associated with personal advancement to justify expenses on reading materials of broader scope.’”  

From the Nigerian colonial government’s point of view, the matter was forgotten when the outbreak of World War II and the early victories of the Axis Powers in Europe, Africa and Asia prompted the CCNY to withdraw its offer and suspend its grant provision for the duration of the conflict. For the British Council the observations and recommendations of the Wrong-Vischer Report were far from forgotten as it began its own library development activities in the colony of Nigeria.

When the British Council opened its Lagos office in December 1943 it did so by opening a fee-based reading room and institute at the Exhibition Center on the Lagos Marina.  

From 1943 to 1944, the British Council also operated reading rooms throughout the towns and cities of Nigeria.

They were stocked with newspapers, bulletins, and prominent periodicals such as “War in Pictures” and “Illustrated London News”. These bulletins, usually issued by the Nigerian government, depicted German totalitarianism and militarism, Italian fascism and brutality, Japanese sly wiles and atrocities...Soon these Reading Rooms began to function as living organisms with considerable influence on the morale of the people and as a result reading, which was a rarity before the war, became a generality during and after it.  

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However, it was not until October 1945 that the British Council turned its attention toward the Lagos Library and two private libraries, the Tom Jones Library and the Henry Carr Library, in a bid to consolidate these institutions into a national library for Nigeria.

**The Colonial Subscription Library as Place**

The three subscription libraries under study during this time period—the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Lagos Library—served different roles for their library communities in times of peace. They also acted as indomitable symbols of British colonial rule in times of distress. Prior to World War II, the Penang Library was still a cherished institution by its subscribers and the Straits Settlements government. It was also becoming a more racially and ethnically diverse environment by virtue of the fact that its library committee contained some of the leading members of the British, Malaysian, Chinese and Indian communities. During this period, the Penang Library solidified its role as a comfort zone and source of entertainment for its subscribers than as a place for the academic and scientific enlightenment of its membership. The weight of the library’s collection and its collection development strategy offers some insight into this claim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject &amp; Years</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Natural History</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry &amp; Drama</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>376</strong></td>
<td><strong>353</strong></td>
<td><strong>381</strong></td>
<td><strong>337</strong></td>
<td><strong>366</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 6: Sample of Books Added to Penang Library Collection 1935 to 1939

Table 7: Number of Volumes Issued by the Penang Library 1935 to 1939

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject &amp; Years</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Natural History</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>1240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>2769</td>
<td>2851</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>2716</td>
<td>3085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry &amp; Drama</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>30291</td>
<td>32997</td>
<td>30009</td>
<td>32941</td>
<td>32595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td>33455</td>
<td>36328</td>
<td>33389</td>
<td>36086</td>
<td>36080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emphasis by which subscribers utilized the fiction, biography, and poetry & drama sections of the library’s collection over its historical subjects indicates that subscribers used the institution to entertain themselves more so than inform themselves of the world around them. The Penang Library was a place to relax and enjoy the comforts of reading with their British and indigenous social peers.

The arrival of World War II changed this dynamic. With the Japanese occupation, those of the colonizer elite who failed to evacuate Malaysia were either killed, interred or fought with the MPAJA. Some of those colonized elite who remained behind maintained and operated the Penang Library. For them the library probably served as a familiar symbol of British colonial rule in an increasingly unfamiliar world. There is little doubt that the Japanese occupation greatly disrupted the normal order of life for the indigenous elite. The Penang Library may have served as a reminder of the status and privileges they once enjoyed and could enjoy again as rumors and news of Axis defeats and Allied victories filtered into Malaysia.

To the indigenous masses who could not have afforded a subscription to the Penang Library in the past, World War II may have been a unique opportunity for them

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to enter a place of reading which was beyond anything they were accustomed to in their lives. While the reading materials may have been familiar to them through the English and vernacular language reading rooms and schools established throughout the island, the Penang Library itself was an unfamiliar space, a portal into how their social betters—colonizer and colonized elite—entertained themselves.

As a symbol of British colonial rule, the Penang Library acted as almost the only opportunity for local people to maintain their interest in British culture and their knowledge of the English language. In this capacity, the Penang Library served as a cultural link between the displaced colonizer and the captive colonized. This link was not only strong enough to survive the Japanese occupation and the Communist insurgency which followed but also durable enough to spur the Penang Library’s renewal which shall be explored in Chapter 4. Whether the Japanese military utilized the Penang Library prior to its closure in 1944 is unknown, what is known is that the library during World War II was both a familiar and unfamiliar space; an old refuge and a new territory for both the indigenous elite and masses.

Like the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica still served the same roles prior to World War II that it did during the conflict. It was a cultural center, a networking nexus and a place of frenetic intellectual activity. But during the period of subscription library co-optation, the General Library was increasingly becoming a site where subscribers came to be entertained more so than informed as the library’s collection development patterns will reveal.

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Table 8: Sample Collection Size and Content of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica from 1930 to 1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject &amp; Years</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theology &amp; Philosophy</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>2386</td>
<td>2555</td>
<td>2736</td>
<td>2807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Natural History</td>
<td>2145</td>
<td>2304</td>
<td>2441</td>
<td>2534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td>5578</td>
<td>5973</td>
<td>6353</td>
<td>6548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>2168</td>
<td>2487</td>
<td>2903</td>
<td>3067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry &amp; Drama</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>1072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose Fiction</td>
<td>6688</td>
<td>5248</td>
<td>8060</td>
<td>8609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total:</td>
<td>9658</td>
<td>8666</td>
<td>11981</td>
<td>12748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the growing size of the prose fiction, poetry & drama, and biography sections show, there was a sustained interest by the subscribers for entertainment as opposed to academic and scientific inquiry. For these latter pursuits, subscribers still had access to the museum, the art gallery, the lecture hall, the publication office and the West Indian Reference Library to satisfy their intellectual needs. In the interwar years, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica may have served as a symbol of British colonial rule in turbulent times. Between the rise of indigenous reform movements, the economic hardships of the Great Depression and the strikes of the 1930s, the colonizer and colonized elite may have viewed the facility as a bastion of orderly calm reflecting an ideal of British colonial rule.

During World War II as much as the Penang Library was a physically besieged institution, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was an institutionally besieged one. Its subscribers may have considered it to be their institution and cared not for the larger reading needs of the colonized masses. This would explain why the British and indigenous elite who subscribed to the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica supported the creation of the Manchester Free Library in Mandeville. They may have

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wanted that public library and all other public libraries that would emerge in its wake to serve the colonized masses while the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica would belong to them. In a very telling remark upon the failure of the book box scheme the library operated in years past, Governor Denham during a speech endorsing the creation of the Manchester Free Library admitted,

First of all, they [the Institute of Jamaica] had to put books into the hands of those who could read them, and then in the hands of those who could make use of them. They wanted to give further opportunity of the people to read more books. He believed that the project could be worked successfully and carried out on a financial basis; but in order to make it practical they should have a place where the people would come and read. Very often they got distribution without choice.\(^{286}\)

For the subscribers of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica, it was an institution that was dear to them and their care for it could have lead to a sense of shock and betrayal when Nora Bateson published the results of her survey in 1945. The changes the Bateson Plan advocated may have created a feeling among subscribers that their library was being taken from them and given to the undeserving indigenous masses. For as much as the General Library retained its status as an informational, educational and social crucible for the British and indigenous elite, it was undergoing an institutional siege from some elements of the colonized elite, the colonized masses and the British Council.

The Lagos Library as a place for its subscribers bore a greater resemblance to the Penang Library than it did to the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica. Like the Penang Library, the Lagos Library enjoyed a racially and ethnically diverse leadership and membership. Also its collection was heavily slanted towards fiction and designed purely for the entertainment purposes of its subscribers. It was a place for the British and indigenous elite to be entertained and to stay informed about the world around them rather than to be educated in an academic or scientific capacity as Table 9 will reveal.

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\(^{286}\) *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston), 5 August 1937.
Table 9: Sample Collection Size and Content of the Lagos Library 1932 to 1934\textsuperscript{287}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject &amp; Years</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1365</td>
<td>2428</td>
<td>2871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry and Drama</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Biography and Travel</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>1427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2882</strong></td>
<td><strong>4011</strong></td>
<td><strong>5648</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because it lacked an art gallery or lecture hall or museum, the Lagos Library may have been purely used for recreation rather than networking because other institutions such as the Dining Club, the Lagos Dinner Club and the Ikoyri Club may have served as the social network centers for the British and indigenous elite. As Sir Rex Niven, a British civil servant who worked with Sir Alan Burns in Nigeria intimated, “There was absolute and very strict equality and no form of colour bar, but that did not mean that there was any genuine mixing. There was some ‘careful’ entertainment by Europeans of Africans and their wives...It is notable that the Nigerians, however wealthy, seldom entertained white people.”\textsuperscript{288}

The Lagos Library also served as a symbol of British colonial rule for the colonized masses supporting the indigenous reform movements in the 1930s. As previously documented, the Lagos Library was attacked by Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe and the local newspaper, \textit{West Africa}, on its income restrictions for membership. For these entities and their allies, the Lagos Library may have represented the arrogance of the colonizer in the belief that access to knowledge and information was their sole purview. For the colonizer, the Lagos Library may have served as an entertainment bunker in a barrage of reformist attacks on colonial privilege.


In all likelihood, the Lagos Library would have been the least active and the most serene comfort zone for reading of the three subscription libraries examined. During World War II the Lagos Library also may have served as a distribution point for British propaganda along with the rest of the British Council reading rooms established throughout Nigeria but it was largely untouched by the conflict save for delays or losses it may have endured in receiving book shipments. For its subscribers, the Lagos Library was designed purely for quiet comfortable entertainment yet it may have acted as a cultural link to the rest of the British Empire. The library as place for the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Lagos Library during the period of subscription library co-optation was a site of ongoing changes.

Changes in Other Cultural Institutions

These changes also resonated in other cultural institutions throughout the British Empire. Initially, clubs in India served as private sanctuaries and intellectual centers for conversation and debate among the British elite. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth century, these institutions achieved a level of popularity through the provision of room and board for those among their number who were either transient or permanently residing in the city. Mrinalini Sinha also observed, “Although the various European agents of colonialism in India continued to have contradictory priorities, the clubland came to represent the powerful voice of Anglo-Indian public opinion. Government officials, in fact, looked upon club membership as a means of keeping a finger on the pulse of popular Anglo-Indian opinion in the province.” While the colonial government utilized clubs to gauge the opinion of the British elite, the Indianization of the Indian Civil Service during the 1920s and 1930s challenged the Britishness of clubland.

The rise of this indigenous elite not only added a new dimension to the British elite and the Indian princes longstanding contest over the accessibility to power but also began to weaken the racial and income barriers on Indian membership to these clubs.

290 Ibid, 508.
291 Ibid, 515.
For example, Dharam Vira realized when he received his post as the District Magistrate and Collector in Bareilly in the United Provinces that he was also the ex officio president of the local club and retained his membership in spite of the objections of some of the British elite membership.\textsuperscript{292} The Indianization of the Indian Civil Service had a similar impact on the hill stations of India.

In these remote locations, the British elite transformed their intellectual refuges and sanctuaries of Britishness in the nineteenth century into an integral aspect of colonial life in India by the early-twentieth century. The hill stations served as nurseries, schools, courtship sites, career contact zones, retirement homes and convalescence centers. These hill stations were designed to socially reproduce the British elite.\textsuperscript{293} As the growing dependence of the British elite upon the Malaysian, Jamaican and Nigerian elite to operate the colonial bureaucracy began to change the Britishness of subscription libraries, the Indianization of the British Raj also brought significant changes to the hill stations as the indigenous elite clamored for accessibility to power.

The British saw their creations become riddled with the paradoxes of success: the hill stations’ popularity as centers of British social activity made them increasingly popular sites for holidays by a Westernized Indian middle class, while their prominence as centers of British political power made them increasingly potent symbols of tyranny for an energetic Indian nationalist movement. As a result, they soon ceased to serve as British sanctuums, as special sites set apart from the rest of India...\textsuperscript{294}

Aside from a rise in popularity during World War I and World War II when the British elite were trapped in India, the hill stations lost their British exclusivity as more members of the indigenous elite journeyed to and resided within the hill stations for the same reasons the colonizer elite enjoyed them. In the aftermath of World War II, the pace of these changes quickened for not only the clubs and hill stations of the British Raj but also for the subscription libraries of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria. For the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Lagos Library these

\textsuperscript{294} Ibid, 204.
changes shook the very foundations of these subscription libraries as colonial institutions attempted to survive in a post-colonial world. Another factor which ameliorated these changes was the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 by the British Parliament.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945

On 7 February 1945 as the successful Allied campaign in the European Theater of World War II was rapidly drawing to a close, the House of Commons turned towards the post-war economic, political and social future of The British Empire when Colonel Oliver Stanley, The Secretary of State for the Colonies, brought forth a new Colonial Development and Welfare Bill for its Second Reading. This bill proposed the abrogation of annual accounting as it pertained to colonial development, the nullification of the return to the Exchequer of unspent funds, the doubling of allocations made available under CDWA 1940 and the extension of the original act from March 1941-March 1951 to the new term of March 1946-March 1956.²⁹⁵

During the Parliamentary debate, the Secretary of State for the Colonies admitted only £1,000,000 was actually spent during the first three years of CDWA 1940 and only a little over £2,500,000 was spent during the first four years of its operation.²⁹⁶ Colonel Stanley blamed the failure to utilize the totality of the allocated funds on the hardships The British Empire suffered during World War II. As an addendum to his request for passage of the bill, The Secretary of State for the Colonies emphasized, “I want to make it plain that this fund is not, is never intended to be and never could be the sole and permanent support of all the social requirements of the whole of the Colonial Empire…and the object [of the Bill] is to give the territories the help that they want and must have if they are to stand for themselves the process of developing their own resources.”²⁹⁷

As the debate shifted towards a particular of the bill—education—discussions on vocational training and liberal arts education were joined by calls for the development of

²⁹⁷ Ibid., col. 2098-2099.
a university system of education in the British colonies. For example, Colonel Stanley admitted, “It will not be easy to find room for the enormous number of technically-trained people, who will be required in the Colonies to carry out the various schemes which we have in mind, and for that reason the early setting up of a decent standard of higher education in the Colonial territories, is an absolute necessity for the proper development of the territories themselves.”

Vice-Admiral Taylor, MP for South Paddington, addressed the problem of illiteracy in the colonies and believed that planning was essential to the success of the implementation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1945, “…There is an immense amount of illiteracy and lack of knowledge generally, and unless we can educate the people to the point where they can make full use of what we are doing for them, we are merely wasting our time. The appointment of educational personnel, social and welfare organizers, and the building of a large number of schools is essential for this work.”

After the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1945 passed its Second Reading in The House of Commons and was presented to the House of Lords, the Duke of Devonshire’s presentation mirrored the opinions of the Secretary of State for the Colonies by admitting that the ultimate goal of the bill was to improve the standard of living for the colonized. Unlike the House of Commons, the House of Lords maintained their preference for vocational education over a liberal arts education but still saw the value of introducing a university system into the British colonies. Lord Hailey asserted,

“I think this consideration gives particular force to the proposal which the Secretary of State has adumbrated elsewhere…universities which shall not merely be centers for the teaching of arts and science, but centers equally of professional and vocational instruction, centers in short that will produce the agriculturists, the medical men, the geologists and the thousand other specialists that are required for a development program of this magnitude.”

298 Ibid., col. 2107.
299 Ibid., col. 2141.
301 Ibid., col. 937.
Earl De La Warr added, “If we are to develop the Empire at the speed, and incidentally at the cost, that is necessary, we shall have to train immense numbers of the native people themselves to carry out the much needed task.”\(^{302}\) In spite of a decreased amount of interest when compared to the debate surrounding CDWA 1940—eighteen MPs and fourteen Lords debated the bill while five MPs and four Lords addressed the educational aspects of the bill—CDWA 1945 achieved the Royal Assent on 25 April 1945.

The aim of CDWA 1945 was two-fold: address the shortcomings of CDWA 1940 and expand upon the funding its predecessor provided. With regards to the shortcomings of CDWA 1940, the act suffered from two fundamental flaws: its provision of £5 million a year became insufficient to meet the development needs of the colonial governments and unspent funding at the end of the fiscal year could not be carried forward into the following fiscal year. These discrepancies not only limited the effectiveness of CDWA 1940 throughout World War II but also restricted the ability of the colonial governments to plan ahead as expenditures rose.\(^{303}\)

To correct these shortcomings, CDWA 1945 provided a total sum of £120 million over ten years from 1946 to 1956, and carried forward £20 million in commitments under CDWA 1940. The British Treasury established the Colonial Economic Development Council to review applications for assistance while CDWA 1945 allowed funding to be drawn upon at any time within a given fiscal year and subject only to a single limitation of £17.5 million a year. While £1 million a year of this sum was allocated towards research, CDWA 1945 permitted research funding to continue beyond the expiration date of the Act itself.\(^{304}\)

\(^{302}\) Ibid., col. 949.


But its most important advantage was that it enabled the Secretary of State to make to Colonial Governments firm allocations of money in advance which could form the nucleus of their development finance. This gave a great impetus to the planning of development, even in the territories where C.D. and W. funds were to be only a small part of the total finance available. ³⁰⁵

In the colony of Malaysia, CDWA 1945’s primary and secondary education allotments amounted to £2,923,000; technical and vocational education allotments comprised £2,211,000 and higher education allotments amounted to £36,000 with £1,717,000 earmarked for the creation of the University College at Ibadan in 1948. In the colony of Malaysia, CDWA 1945’s primary and secondary education allotments amounted to £500,000; technical and vocational education allotments reached £546,000 and higher education allotments extended to £14,000 with £647,000 earmarked for the construction of the University of Malaya in 1949. In the colony of Jamaica, CDWA 1945’s allocation for primary and secondary education reached £1,144,000; technical and vocational education allotments stood at £43,000 while higher education received £92,000. The Act also allocated £3,106,000 for the creation of the University College of the West Indies and the University College Hospital in 1948. ³⁰⁶

The real impact of CDWA 1945 resided within its continuance of the British metropolitan government’s policy of hands-on colonial development. On one level, the British Parliament attempted to correct the errors of the past by economically, socially and politically developing the British colonies for economic self-sufficiency and increase their value to the British metropolis. On another level, the British metropolitan government was trying to appease the reform movements within its colonies and ensure their loyalty during the dark years of World War II. At a time when the Nazi war machine was rolling like a juggernaut through Europe and Africa and the Japanese were seizing the Asian colonies of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and the United

States; the British metropolis wanted to leave nothing to chance in their remaining colonial possessions.

While Parliament and the Colonial Office were opposed to granting major political concessions to the reform movements, they were more than willing to concede social, economic and cultural reforms in exchange for their support and loyalty during and after the war. This could explain why the British Council established reading rooms scattered throughout the towns and cities of Nigeria shortly after it arrived. It could also explain why the British Council prodded the Institute of Jamaica to co-sponsor a library survey during World War II rather than wait until after the conflict was won. It could also explain why the British metropolitan and colonial governments attempted to co-opt the subscription libraries within these colonies. The desire to guarantee loyalty required immediacy of action. But the changes CDWA 1945, the British Council, World War II, the British Parliament and the colonial governments wrought were insufficient to stem the tide of nationalism that emerged in the post-war world.
CHAPTER 4
SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY AUTONOMY (1945-1962)

The period of subscription library autonomy began with the passage of the Colonial Development Act of 1945 (CDWA 1945) and continued until the respective dates of independence for each of the British Empire’s African, Asian and Caribbean colonies under study here was achieved. With the end of World War II, the reform movements of the colonized elite developed into nationalist movements dedicated not only to social, cultural, economic and political reforms but also the complete abolition of the colonial system in favor of full independence. Nationalist movements such as the Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM), the People’s Nationalist Party (PNP) of Jamaica and the Action Group (AG) of Nigeria utilized violent means such as armed insurrection and non-violent means such as peaceful demonstrations to achieve their goal of obtaining freedom for their respective constituencies.

One of the contributing factors which aided these nationalist movements in achieving their goals was the numerical superiority of the colonized elite within the colonial bureaucracy. For the indigenous elite, this governmental infrastructure served as a solid framework for a national bureaucracy once the British elite and European non-elite in the employ of the Colonial Office were compelled to leave. For example, Tables 10, 11 & 12 reveal that in the more reading-intensive occupations of clerks, teachers and lawyers for Malaysia, Jamaica and Nigeria during the post World War II era, the colonized elite were numerically poised to assume control over their respective colonial bureaucracies.
Table 10: Reading-intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Penang in 1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>Malays</th>
<th>Other Malaysians</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Eurasians</th>
<th>Other Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5150</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6189</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Reading-intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Lagos in 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>All Nigerian Tribes</th>
<th>British Commonwealth</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Other Europeans</th>
<th>Lebanese &amp; Syrians</th>
<th>Other Foreigners &amp; Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>8059</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>3626</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13486</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Reading-intensive Occupations by Race & Ethnicity for Jamaica in 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation &amp; Race</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>East Indian &amp; Afro East Indian</th>
<th>Chinese &amp; Afro Chinese</th>
<th>Afro European</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>6099</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>2742</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6290</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>2914</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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308 Nigeria. Department of Statistics. Population Census of Lagos 1950. Kadua: The Government Printer, 1951, 73, 77, 79-80. It must be noted that the Nigerian census data for lawyers are the actual totals for the larger category of professional, technical and related workers because a more refined estimate was not possible to discern. It must be denoted that the population tabulation for clerks includes office appliance operators.

309 Jamaica. Department of Statistics. West Indies Population Census: Census of Jamaica 7th April, 1960 Volume II Part F Section I. Kingston: Jamaica Tabulation Centre, 1963, 1. It must be denoted that the census data for lawyers are the actual totals of the larger category of solicitors, barristers, lawyers and judges because a more refined estimate was not possible to achieve. It must also be noted that the population tabulation for clerks includes office machine operators.
For subscription librarianship, this period represented a time of reorganization and rebirth for some institutions and a time of retrenchment and isolation for others as public librarianship surged to the forefront of cultural and social life in Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria. During this period, the British Council, the colonial governments and the emerging independent governments intermittently argued over the fates of the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Lagos Library. Questions arose as to whether or not these institutions should be converted into public libraries, handed over to the British Council or closed with their collections dispersed among the emerging public libraries. Ironically, these questions were not successfully answered until well after independence was achieved. Yet the role and function of these subscription libraries were fundamentally altered by these debates. Before any analysis of colonial subscription libraries can begin an assessment of their metropolitan counterparts must be conducted to show that the financial and institutional challenges subscription libraries confronted during this era were not unique to the colonies.

The Metropolis (1945-1962)

As much as CDWA 1945 revealed the commitment of the British metropolis to economically, socially and culturally develop the British colonies, the Parliamentary debates surrounding this Act also displayed a spectrum of opinions on the future of the colonies themselves. Some within the House of Commons such as Colonel Oliver Stanley, The Secretary of State for the Colonies, viewed these dependencies as an area for new markets which could be exploited with CDWA funding, “In the Colonial Empire, we have millions of people at present on a low standard of life. If we can make even a comparatively small addition to this purchasing power there will be presented vast new markets which will be of great advantage to them and from which we now can draw our advantage.”310 Others such as Dr. Hyacinth Morgan, MP for Rochdale, advocated the reorganization of the colonies into federations, “Why will you not give the West Indies federation? Each island must have a system of its own, its own shipping, and its own airships and so on, instead of being federated, as they have been asking for years. Each island cannot afford to pay on its own for radio, education, finance, taxation and

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agriculture, services, etc.” Still others such as Henderson Stewart, MP for Fife, East, believed the colonies should become self-governing independent states, “If this money were used, for example, merely to meet the growing upkeep cost of education, it would be wasted, but if it is used mainly for development of capital projects, educational, economic, and others, which in themselves will yield a return in years to come, so that the Colony becomes independent, self-reliant, and self-supporting, the money will have been well spent.”

As D.A. Low noted in *Eclipse of Empire* this official debate over the future of the British colonies was part of an imperialist-nationalist contradiction. On one hand, Parliamentarians, officials and bureaucrats within the metropolitan government viewed the British Empire not only as a symbol of Great Power prestige but also as the ultimate embodiment of their self-image of dominance and were reluctant to see their empire come to an end. On the other hand, some of these same British leaders and those with anti-imperialist sympathies supported the principles of self-government and wanted the British colonies to politically, economically and socially become self-sufficient. This imperialist-nationalist contradiction not only emerged within official channels but also in unofficial channels.

Within unofficial channels during the late 1940s, an even wider spectrum of opinion on the future of the colonies started to emerge. T.C. Wilkinson, an instructor at Worcester College, Oxford, wanted a closer connection between the metropolis and the colonies to preserve the British Empire:

> To further the feeling of Empire unity, counter provincialism in local politics, and discourage racial prejudice I would like to suggest that each borough in the United Kingdom be invited to cooperate voluntarily with one administrative area in the background parts of our colonial Empire. Scholarships could be provided to a council school...But, above all, a personal link would be forged between the two communities, and a

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311 Ibid, col. 2130.
312 Ibid, col. 2159.
colonial student coming to England would not feel such an unwelcome stranger.\footnote{314}

While Cyril Dumpleton, MP for St. Albans, within a letter to the editor of \textit{The Times} advocated colonial development neither for the maintenance of the British Empire nor for the independence of the colonies. “But the challenge to us in Great Britain does not come because of the fear of those evil consequences [Communism and nationalism]. The challenge is to our Christianity. To the extent that we are a truly Christian nation we should deny ourselves so that the living standards for millions, for which we have direct responsibility are raised nearer to our own.”\footnote{315} But as P.J. Cain and A.J. Hopkins noted in \textit{British Imperialism 1688-2000}, “As seen from Whitehall, the question was not whether the British empire had a future but how and when it was to be realized.”\footnote{316}

The realization of this future would be a policy of granting gradual independence to those colonies of the British Empire which requested it. During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the British government engaged in a policy of de-colonization for its white-settlement colonies. In a slow but steady progression of political, social and economic development, Canada, South Africa and Australia moved from crown colony status to representative government to responsible government and finally to Dominion status.\footnote{317} From 1945 to 1962, the metropolis engaged in an abbreviated process of gradual de-colonization by politically, economically and socially moving its dependencies from crown colony status into larger regional federations. When these federations collapsed due to the nationalistic desires of the colonized elite and masses, the British continued to help move these post-federation states towards independence within the British Commonwealth.

This process of gradual de-colonization was not without its shortcomings. No formal timetable was ever established and the British government believed it should control both the spread and stages of progression by which the colonies gained their independence. When pressured by external and nationalist forces to quicken the pace, the British metropolis often avoided submitting to their demands and continued with gradual

de-colonization because its economic dependency upon the Sterling Area had grown and because the United States reversed its anti-imperialist policy at the end of World War II.  

Starting in the 1930s and running through the global conflict, the Sterling Area allowed the metropolis to establish closer economic links with its colonies and to coordinate and control trade between Great Britain and the colonies. In the aftermath of World War II, the British government relaxed most of its controls over imperial trade yet still found high levels of profitability within the Sterling Area when compared to trading with a devastated Europe. As Bernard Porter observed in The Lion’s Share,

In the tropical colonies, which now formed the bulk of her dependent empire, Britain’s interests were as vital as ever, or more so...What they [the tropical colonies] did do was to supply her with a large quantity of very vital metals (copper, tin, cobalt, gold, uranium), vegetable products (rubber, palm-oil) and foods (cocoa, coffee groundnuts), all of which were exploited more voraciously in the post-war years than ever before, and by bigger and more powerful European industrial monoliths.

It was not until the rise of the European Common Market in the mid-1950s that the British government began to shift its economic attention away from the Sterling Area and towards Western Europe. In the late 1940s Great Britain conducted half of her trade within the Sterling Area and one-quarter with Western Europe. A decade later, this balance of trade started to reverse itself. This balance of trade reversal coupled with Great Britain’s stagnant economic growth compelled the metropolis in 1961 to apply for membership to the European Economic Community when four years before it was offered but declined membership within the European Common Market. Though Great Britain’s application for membership to the European Economic Community was vetoed by France in 1958, the British metropolis staged three subsequent attempts to enter the European organization before success was achieved in 1971.

With regards to the United States’ reversal of its anti-imperialist stance at the end of World War II, the origins of this reversal emerged from Anglo-American differences during the global conflict. From 1941 to 1945 Great Britain’s adherence to the Atlantic Charter served as a sticking point in Anglo-American relations over the issue of de-colonization. The treaty bound the two nations to a post-war environment in which neither country would seek territorial aggrandizement as a result of World War II; neither country would seek territorial changes which did not match the freely-expressed will of the people concerned; both countries would respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they wanted to live; and both countries would restore self-government and sovereignty to those nations which had been forcibly deprived of them.\(^\text{321}\) After the agreement was signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, “the British government was soon alarmed by its implications; the Americans, whose anti-imperialism at the conference went no further than trying to break down the system of imperial preference, later took the phrase as a commitment to oppose imperial rule. Nationalists in European colonies naturally took the phrase in its widest sense in the years to come.”\(^\text{322}\)

Though the tenets of the Atlantic Charter served as the foundation of American foreign policy on anti-imperialism during World War II, the reversal of this policy came with the end of the war and the rise of Communism. By playing on America’s anti-Communist anxiety, the British Empire convinced the United States that it could help counter the threat of Communism if their empire was intact. Both sides reached a compromise: the United States agreed not to press for immediate de-colonization and the British agreed to modernize their empire.\(^\text{323}\)

From 1945 to 1956, Great Britain was given economic license by the profitability of the Sterling Area and political license by the United States to proceed forward with de-colonization at a pace and timing of their choosing. In the colony of Malaysia, gradual de-colonization was coupled with a sustained military campaign against Communist


insurgents from 1948 to 1957. The goals of the British counter-insurgency were to destroy the Communist Party of Malaysia and prevent the colony from becoming a satellite of Communist China. In the colonies of Jamaica and Nigeria, gradual de-colonization manifested itself through a series of political, social and constitutional reforms designed at first to prepare these colonies for their respective places within regional federations and later to prepare them for independence within the British Commonwealth. These were not the only colonies to achieve independence under gradual de-colonization as Cyprus followed suit in 1960, Sierra Leone in 1961 and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962 to name three among several. However, this policy of gradual de-colonization shifted towards rapid de-colonization with the advent of the Suez Crisis of 1956.

When Gamal Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt, nationalized the Suez Canal threatening European economic interests in the Middle East, the combined British, French and Israeli military response to this seizure damaged Anglo-American relations, destroyed the Great Power prestige of the British metropolis and shifted Whitehall’s policy from gradual de-colonization to rapid de-colonization. As D.A. Low noted the Suez Crisis helped crystallize an international perception that the British Empire’s capacity to guide its colonies to social, economic and political development as independent states was greatly diminished. While the threat of Communist expansion shifted America’s endorsement of immediate de-colonization towards gradual de-colonization in 1945, the Suez Crisis marked an American policy reversal towards immediate de-colonization. P.J. Cain and A.J. Hopkins observed, “Decolonization, when it came, owed much to the nationalist pressure and to the changing strategy of the United States, which eventually accepted the idea that upholding the European empires was not necessarily the best way of winning the hearts and minds of subject peoples.”

Though the British metropolis confronted the dismemberment of its empire abroad, it also witnessed the rise of socialism at home.

On the domestic front, the move by Clement Atlee, post-war Prime Minister of Great Britain, and his immediate successors to create a welfare state and institute some

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aspects of socialism in the metropolis provided many material and social benefits for the
British people. These material and social benefits were the nationalization of the coal,
railway, electricity, trucking, gas, shipping, airline and iron and steel industries which
helped to reduce unemployment, control costs, and make these services more affordable
to British consumers. Another set of material and social benefits were the provision of a
national insurance fund which provided pensions and unemployment assistance, the
offering of free legal aid, subsidized housing, the expansion of the nation’s educational
system and the creation of a universal health care service.\textsuperscript{326}

These benefits, however, came at the cost of higher taxes which subscription
libraries among other tax-paying entities throughout Great Britain had to bear. In the
periods of subscription library dominance and co-optation, the number of subscription
libraries in England decreased from 44 in 1900 to just 15 by 1950.\textsuperscript{327} The London
Library continued to thrive in spite of a failed attempt to combine with the Leeds Library
and fend off the imposition of higher tax rates by the metropolitan government during the
1950s.\textsuperscript{328} For the Bradford Library and Literary Society, the period of subscription
library autonomy brought a series of financial hardships.

First, there was a heavy burden of maintenance: a new heating system was
installed in 1949; there was a bad fire in the building in 1963; the lighting
was modernized…Secondly, there was a heavy tax burden. In 1961 the
Bradford Corporation proposed to rate that part of the building occupied
by the library itself and in 1961 there was a demand for arrears of £1325
with a future annual commitment of £500…Thirdly, there were increased
rising costs; fuels and book prices, salaries and subscriptions all rose and
National Insurance contributions were introduced…Lastly, membership
was falling. In 1951 the number of proprietors was only 409.\textsuperscript{329}

While these problems eventually contributed to the closure of the library in 1980,
the London Library survived to the present. As subscription libraries in the British

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
metropolis labored to survive these long years of financial stringency, they were not alone in this endeavor. The extra-governmental agency, The British Council, was not only confronting budgetary restrictions in the post-war era but also undergoing institutional review from the metropolitan government.

The British Council

The history of the British Council after World War II can be divided into three phases: The first phase lasted from 1945 to 1948 and involved the political and economic retrenchment of the organization; the second phase lasted from 1948 to 1954 and involved a cessation of public library development while the third phase lasted from 1954 onward with a renewal of public library development in the British colonies.

From 1945 to 1948 the British Council experienced political and economic retrenchment to the extent that it’s very mission and value as an agency of the British metropolis was called into question. When the British Empire emerged politically and economically exhausted from World War II, budgetary cutbacks were experienced throughout the metropolitan government and the British Council was no exception from these reductions. From 1947 to 1948 the total budget of the British Council was £3,500,000 yet from 1951 to 1952 it dropped to £2,650,000. The sum of money allocated to the British Council for book purchases dropped from £81,000 from 1947 to 1948 to below £20,000 from 1951 to 1952. These reductions negatively impacted upon the effectiveness of the British Council and forced a scaling back of its operations throughout the British Empire and the world at large. They also may have given rise to the second phase of the British Council’s history which almost brought a complete stop to all of its public library development schemes.

From 1948 to 1954 the Colonial Office redefined the role and mission of the British Council as it pertained to public library development. On 9 August 1948 the Colonial Office issued a Definition Document which stated that the British Council would be permitted to maintain a small reading room and library within the Council centers located in the British colonies. But the overall function of the agency was to no

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longer establish and maintain colonial public libraries. The British Council would be allowed to provide working presentations, train local staff and lend librarians to encourage and organize local public library development. Beyond these stated terms, all existing schemes were to be transferred to local colonial authorities as soon as possible.331

In the colonies under study, the Definition Document had near-catastrophic consequences for public library development. In the British colony of Malaysia, the Definition Document restricted the British Council to creating a small center instead of a large library to counter the presence of the USIS Library in Penang.332 In the British colony of Nigeria, the Definition Document pulled the British Council Office in Lagos out of a joint venture with the Lagos Town Council to operate and manage the Lagos Public Library in 1950.333 And in the British colony of Jamaica, Hugh Paget and Harold Frederick Oxbury, the Director of the Colonies Department of the British Council, shamed the Colonial Office and the Treasury into honoring the British Council’s multiyear public library development agreement with the Jamaican colonial government when the terms of the Definition Document threatened to scuttle their public library scheme.334

As J.D.A. Barnicot intimated in “The Libraries of the British Council” the Definition Document of the Colonial Office compelled British Council librarians throughout the colonies to sell the concept of a self-supporting public library service to local authorities and speed its implementation before the British Council’s aid was withdrawn.335 Though British Council librarians were unable to sell the concept in Malaysia they did have a modicum of success in both Nigeria and Jamaica. However, the losses the British Council suffered and the duration of these phases barely allowed the

332 BW 104/2 J.D.A. Barnicot to E.J. Carter, Esquire, 26 June 1951.
agency to fully recover before the onset of colonial independence during the third phase of its history.

From 1952 to 1953 the independent Committee of Inquiry into the Overseas Information Services under the chairmanship of the Earl of Drogheda reviewed the role, function and activities of The British Council. In July 1953, the committee presented its findings to the British Parliament and announced among many measures, “Libraries were ‘the essential core of all British Council centres abroad’ and it was imperative that the supply of books, periodicals and display materials for libraries and reading rooms be restored.”  

The British metropolitan government endorsed its recommendations a year later and restored much of the funding the British Council lost between 1948 and 1954 to its operational budget. For example, the grant for books was frozen from 1951 to 1952 at £20,000. From 1954 to 1955 this total was raised to roughly £45,000.  

While the total grant-in-aid the British Council received from the metropolitan government stood at £2,779,040 in 1951-1952, it was not until 1955-1956 that this total returned to a pre-Definition Document amount of £2,800,427 comparable to the £2,877,802 the agency enjoyed in 1946-47.  

As Mary Niles Maack observed in “Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War” the Drogheda Report from 1954 onward advocated increased government investment in the work of the British Council, shifted the priority of the work from Europe to developing countries, reassessed the library work of the British Council and differentiated between a purely cultural function and an educational role for the British Council by emphasizing the latter.  

These three phases in the British Council’s post-war history not only shaped its colonial public library development schemes, it also influenced its relationship with the subscription libraries that existed within these colonies.

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The History of the Penang Library (1945-1957)

From 1945 to 1957 the Penang Library staged a long and difficult reorganization which allowed it to completely recover from the deleterious effects of the Japanese occupation and experience a level of openness and outreach to the larger Penang community that it had never known. In 1945 the British Military Administration restored to the Penang Library its pre-World War II, Straits Settlements government annual grant of M$4,000.\textsuperscript{340} By the end of 1952 the Penang Library not only received an annual subsidy of M$8,500 from the Federal Government of Malaysia but also an additional M$5,000 from the Georgetown municipal government.\textsuperscript{341} During the post-war era, the total number of subscribers fluctuated wildly from 1006 recorded in 1946 to 891 in 1947. In the following two years the total dropped still further from 798 in 1948 to 786 in 1949. By 1950 the total number of subscribers rebounded to 889, dipped to 700 in 1954 and rose again to 841 in 1955. On the other hand, the library’s collection staged a more steady growth with 642 new volumes added in 1947, 915 added in 1948, 830 added in 1949 and 1157 added in 1950.\textsuperscript{342}

The Penang Library’s competition continued to grow with the erection of the British Council Library in Kuala Lumpur in 1949, the Butterworth Free Library in 1953, the USIS Library in Penang in 1954 and the Klang Gurney Memorial Library in 1956 though neither USIS nor the British Council competed against the Penang Library for colonial government grant funding. In the competition for this funding, the Penang Library and the Klang Gurney Memorial Library were chief rivals with the Butterworth Free Library surviving on donations from private citizens and public entities until its doors were closed in 1970 due to a lack of financial support.


In the previous paragraph it has been noted that the Penang Library received an annual subsidy of M$8,500 from the Federal Government of Malaysia and an annual subsidy of M$5,000 from the municipal government of Penang. The Klang Gurney Memorial Library also received federal and municipal annual subsidies in the amount of M$1,000 and M$1,500 respectively. It is not known why the Klang Gurney Memorial Library received far less funding than the Penang Library. What is known is the fact that prior to Malaysian independence these two libraries regularly sought, competed for and received federal and municipal funding to maintain their operations.

In spite of this post-war competition for government funding, one constant remained from the interwar years: the ethnic and racial diversity of the Penang Library’s leadership and membership as it carried on the mission and goals of its forbearers. Members of the Penang Committee of Management such as Dr. Ong Cheng Keng, Margaret Khor, David Roper and Dr. K. Mohammed Ariff, a Malaysian doctor, to name a few among several worked together to preserve the British character of the Penang Library’s collection by acquiring and purchasing only English-language books, newspapers and periodicals. This degree of autonomy in the area of collection development was not to last long after World War II. The advent of the Malaysian Emergency in 1948 created an opportunity by which the Penang Library was brought increasingly under the control of the colonial government.

Although Dr. Ong Cheng Keng served as the Honorary Librarian of the Penang Library during World War II and worked tirelessly to maintain its operations during the Japanese occupation, the British may have perceived him to be a Communist sympathizer when in August 1948 the Straits Settlements Education Department removed Dr. Keng from his position and replaced him with David Roper, a British resident of Georgetown. The Straits Settlements Education Department also took the unusual step of assuming joint control over the Penang Library with the library’s management committee. The removal of Dr. Keng was the first of five major changes which elevated the Penang

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Library from the loss and squalor of the immediate post war years and paved the way for its conversion into a public library. These changes were the library surveys of the late 1940s, the hiring of Miss Patricia Lim as the first true librarian of the Penang Library in 1954, the founding of the United States Information Service (USIS) Library in 1952 and the attempt by the British Council to seize control of the Penang Library in 1957.

The Malaysian Library Surveys of the 1940s

In December 1946 Sir Angus Gillan completed a three month tour of the British colonies in Southeast Asia and reported his findings to the British Council. He noted, “There is a crying need for Books, most that were already out there having either been destroyed or having perished through neglect, and there is a complete lack of all books published during the War.” While Gillan admitted that the British Council could make a strong and positive impact upon the region overall, he opted for a two to three year delay in the construction of a British Council branch office in Penang. Gillan’s rationale for this assessment is not known. What is known is his assessment was taken under advisement by the British Council which waited until 1952 to establish an official presence on the island of Penang.

With the advent of the Malaysian Emergency in February 1948 and the usage of propaganda by Communist insurgents to discredit British colonial rule, the Colonial Office assessed the viability of expanding the role of the British Council to counter this threat. In a letter from Ivor Thomas, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, to General Sir Ronald Adam, British Adjutant-General to the Forces, Thomas intimated that money for the Colonial and Middle Eastern Services Vote on British Council work in the colonies should be reallocated to not only promoting the British way of life but also services countering internal and external separatist influences that may arise using Malaysia as a test case.

To determine where this reallocation of funds would perform the greatest good, the British Council commissioned Kate D. Ferguson, a British librarian, to execute a library survey of the colony of Malaysia. Upon the completion of her survey in April

346 BW 104/3 Sir Angus Gillan’s Report on S.E. Asia as the result of his Tour October/December 1946. Unless otherwise stated, all archival records are located at the Public Records Office, Kew.
347 BW 104/3 Ivor Thomas to Sir Ronald Adam, 9 August 1947.
1950 and the publication of its findings a month later, Ferguson outlined several problems which she believed hindered the Penang Library’s ability to attract more subscribers from the colonized elite. Some of these observations were:

(a) The Library closes at 6 p.m. on weekdays, and at 3 p.m. on Saturdays. The Library is also closed on Sundays and Holidays. So those who might use it for serious reading and studying find its doors closed in their leisure time.

(c) A subscription paid quarterly might encourage more of the less affected to join.

(f) A section of books in Malay would prove popular.

(h) A few modern methods of publicity and convenient laws; are all that is necessary to make this Library take its place in the community as an Adult education agency, which is the role that a Library should fulfill in any community…

(j) The outlying districts of Penang island would benefit by a Book box scheme and as Housing projects develop in the districts such a service will be necessary until Reading Rooms are built.

The significance of the Ferguson Report was that these recommendations may have served as a critical guide to the restoration of the Penang Library, acted as a framework for community outreach and allowed it to not only attract more subscribers but also touch the lives of those who may have never used the library. The Ferguson Report may have been implemented by Patricia Lim who during her brief tenure as the Honorary Librarian of the Penang Library helped set the subscription library on a path to public librarianship.

The Arrival of Patricia Lim

After a short succession of Honorary Librarians which witnessed Dr. Ong Cheng Keng in charge from 1941 to 1948, David Roper running the library from 1948 to 1950 and Cleah Cheng Poh, a Chinese doctor, operating the Penang Library from 1950 to

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348 BW 104/2 Kate D. Ferguson, A Survey to ascertain the existing available Reading material in the Federation of Malaya and the present provision of books and other literature. London: British Council, 1950, 7-8.
1954, the Education Department of Malaysia hired Patricia Lim, a recent Chinese graduate of the University of Malaya, to serve as the first true librarian in the history of the Penang Library. Possibly utilizing the Ferguson Report as a guide, Patricia Lim launched a comprehensive reorganization program which absorbed her entire tenure from January 1954 to April 1956.

The reorganization involved the disposal of some 10,000 volumes more than half the library’s total stock at that time, which were considered not fit for loan having deteriorated due to frequent borrowing, the activity of white ants and silver fish, or just because of damp and age; the reclassification of the library according to the Dewey Decimal Classification; the establishment of a reference section, a Malaysia section and a Rare Book Room; the amalgamation of the members’ reading room with the public reading room into one common reading room; and the introduction of an improved charging system. The librarian also began to engage in a more positive publicity campaign to attract greater use of the library.  

By engaging in these activities, Lim not only modernized the Penang Library and made it one of the chief cultural centers on the island of Penang but also drastically increased the number of its subscribers from 700 in 1954 when she first assumed control to 841 in the following year. Under Lim’s leadership, the Penang Library never became a true public library but her reorganization and outreach activities mirrored those utilized by public libraries to attract new patrons. By the time Lim resigned in April 1956, the Penang Library completed its metamorphosis from an institution designed to serve only the needs of the British and indigenous elite into one which routinely engaged in cultural outreach to the European non-elite and the indigenous masses. The Penang Library was not the only cultural institution on the island of Penang attempting to satisfy the literacy needs of its subscribers. While part of Lim’s inspiration for the reorganization of the Penang Library may have come from the Ferguson Report another part of her inspiration may also have come from the USIS Library in Penang. Before an assessment

of this American cultural institution can be made, the history of the agency that governed it—the United States Information Agency (USIA)—must be examined.

A Brief History of the USIA

The origins of the USIA date back to the United States involvement in World War II. In June 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI) to disseminate propaganda, encourage cultural activities and share information with Allied countries. “The OWI used the whole range of communication activities, from cultural exchange by means of its library in the American embassy in London to psychological warfare conducted in field operations in conjunction with (and sometimes in conflict with) the Army’s Office of Strategic Services (OSS).” When World War II ended in 1945, President Harry S. Truman replaced the OWI with the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) and placed this agency under the control of the Department of State. The OIC was short-lived as post-war Congressional budget cuts forced the agency to reorganize itself into a smaller unit called the Office of International Information and Educational Exchange (OIE).

The OIE had an even shorter lifespan than its predecessor when the agency was dissolved by the signing of the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 into law by President Truman on 27 January 1948. The objectives of this Act were to enable the American government to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries and to increase mutual understanding between the American citizens and citizens of the world through an information service and educational exchange program. This act “was partly the result of intense pressure on Congress by William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State for Public and Cultural Affairs, and partly the result of impressions received by traveling congressmen who were shocked by the woeful lack of understanding abroad of the United States.”

From its inception this government agency did not go unchallenged in achieving its objectives because the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union

produced an international campaign of Soviet propaganda which attempted to discredit the American way of life at home and abroad. The Kremlin’s desire to discredit the United States came during a series of international setbacks for the Soviet Union. In 1947 the United States prevented Greek Communists from seizing control of the country and toppling its pro-democracy government. Later that year, President Truman enacted the Marshall Plan to not only economically, socially and politically rebuild Western Europe but also buttress its pro-democracy governments against the threat of Communism. In 1948 the United States successfully thwarted the Soviet blockade of West Berlin through the execution of the Berlin Airlift. While in 1949 the United States, Canada and the European participants of the Marshall Plan signed the North Atlantic Treaty pledging themselves to a mutual defense pact against external military aggression. And in 1953 the Korean War ended in a negotiated stalemate which temporarily checked the spread of Communism in the Far East.354

These setbacks frustrated the Soviet Union and invoked them to propagandize American domestic and foreign policy as duplicitous, inhumane and predatory. Henry James, Jr. in “The Role of the Information Library in the United States International Information Program” observed “Soviet charges of racial persecution and terror in the United States became difficult to answer abroad if a ‘full and fair’ picture of the Negro problem in the South were to be projected just as it is. Many issues, such as freedom of speech and the ‘capitalist system’, were found to be completely misunderstood in certain areas overseas.”355

In an effort to counter these charges and misunderstandings, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law on 1 August 1953, the Reorganization Plan No. 8 of 1953 which officially created the USIA and the United States Information Service (USIS) as its cultural division.356 This reorganization plan not only dissolved the Office of International Information and the Office of Educational Exchange which was created by the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 to oversee

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American sponsored overseas libraries but also consolidated these facilities under the control of USIA.

The earliest of these overseas libraries was the Bibliotheca Benjamin Franklin in Mexico City which first opened on 13 April 1942. Created through a joint venture by the American Library Association (ALA) and the United States Department of State, this library was designed to disseminate American cultural values through books, periodicals and newspapers to all who entered the facility. A year later the ALA and the State Department opened three other such libraries in Managua, Nicaragua; Montevideo, Uruguay and Buenos Aires, Argentina. These cultural institutions established the foundation for the dissemination of American printed propaganda throughout the Western Hemisphere during World War II.

The next set of overseas libraries which came under the purview of the USIA were information centers established by the OWI throughout the major cities of the British Empire from 1943 to 1946. These facilities were designed neither to cater to the information needs of the masses nor to loan books for reading nor to propagandize the American way of life. They were organized to satisfy the information needs of those who would disseminate such propaganda—writers, the press, U.S. and local government agencies, radio stations and cultural, educational and scientific institutions. The rationale for the creation of these information centers resided within the belief that “A small, highly selective library containing reference material produced in the United States provides information which can best reach the masses of people in an allied country through the realm of the press, the radio and educational institutions.” These OWI-sponsored information centers provided audio, visual and printed materials to support the dissemination of American propaganda throughout the British Empire during World War II.

In the aftermath of the global conflict, the American Military Government of Germany established the last set of overseas libraries—information centers throughout the American zones of Berlin and Germany proper as part of its larger de-Nazification

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and democratization program.\textsuperscript{359} The \textit{Amerika Häuser} as they came to be called were supplied with a collection representing significant United States publications in various fields of academic, technical and general knowledge which was secured from public and private sources alike.\textsuperscript{360} Originally located in Bad Homburg, Hesse, the \textit{Amerika Häuser} provided community outreach programs to nine facilities throughout the American zones of occupation in Germany.

Taking into account the aforementioned libraries and information centers, the USIA had 196 information centers, special libraries and reading rooms in 53 countries under its direct control when it came into existence. One of these special libraries was the USIS Library in Penang whose presence on the island stirred the British Council out of a policy of inaction towards Penang and into a state of direct cultural involvement.

**The USIS Library in Penang**

At the time of its inception in August 1952 the USIS Library was the only true public library in the island of Penang. It contained over 10,000 volumes, it comfortably seated sixty readers, showed films about American life on a regular basis and from 1953 to 1955 operated a bookmobile service that not only catered to the needs of the residents of Penang but also crisscrossed nineteen towns throughout the whole of northern Malaysia. The library became so popular that by December 1952 it registered over 6,500 members.\textsuperscript{361} But the arrival of the USIS Library did not go unnoticed by either the British Council or the Straits Settlements Government. In a letter from the Straits Settlements Secretary G.C. Dowdell to J.W.L. Gale Esquire, the British Council Representative in Kuala Lumpur, Dowdell confessed,

> It is considered in Georgetown, to be somewhat incongruous for an American organization of this nature to take the initiative in a town whose inhabitants have always been proud of their British connections. While we welcome the efforts being made on our behalf by USIS, it is felt that


Penang with its numerous English schools, its Dominion Group, its Settlement Youth Council, and its growing interest in adult education is a field which should more properly be explored by the British Council.\textsuperscript{362}

In May 1951 Charles Wilmot, the Director of the British Council’s Colonies Department sent a letter to A.F. Baker, Esquire, the British Council Representative for Singapore, about the need for a British Council response to the American presence in Penang. Within this letter Wilmot declared that the British Council had to establish a presence in Penang although he admitted that he was unsure about the availability of funding for such a venture. In an attempt to establish the groundwork for a cultural center, Wilmot called upon Baker to provide a rough estimate and the annual recurring costs for the construction and maintenance of a British Council cultural center in Penang for the fiscal year 1952-1953.\textsuperscript{363} However, the reason why a British Council cultural center was considered for construction instead of a British Council library was because of the Definition Document issued by the Colonial Office on 9 August 1948.

While this document eliminated any opportunity for the British Council to establish a Council Institute or Library that could rival the USIS Library in Penang, it did not stop the litany of complaints about the American cultural presence on the island. R.M. Fry, a Regional Officer for the Federation of Malaysia in the Colonies Department of the British Council, wrote to Charles Wilmot on 31 March 1951, “It will be noticed the USIS is beating us on the equipment and information side, as they are bound to do in view of the funds at their disposal. The result of the Council being insufficiently equipped in this way tends to make the Asiatic and the unthinking and narrow minded European look down on us.”\textsuperscript{364} While on 10 October 1952 Robert K. Brady, British Council Representative for the Federation of Malaysia, in a confidential letter to Wilmot admitted,

The USIS are very well established in Penang...The films number about two hundred and most of them are done in at least two and many in four or five of the following languages: English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Malay (Indonesian) and Tamil. They have as many filmstrips and lecture notes,

\textsuperscript{362} BW 104/3 G.C. Dowdell to J.W.L. Gale, 24 April 1951.
\textsuperscript{363} BW 104/3 Charles Wilmot to A.T. Baker, 29 May 1951.
\textsuperscript{364} BW 104/3 R.M. Fry to Charles Wilmot, 31 May 1951.
and their cinema/lecture room is not only a well appointed room but also a proof to these Asians who visit it that Americans know how to do things. My feeling, however, is that we can do better and more enduring work in Penang, while availing of, and being grateful for, anything they can do that may be of value to the main cause.\textsuperscript{365}

The British Council’s response to the American challenge arrived in May 1952, but it was a limited one. On a rent free basis, they established a cultural center in two rooms on the ground floor of the Penang Library. These rooms had a small Council library and held audiences for meetings, film shows, recitals and lectures.\textsuperscript{366} Dennis Gunton and Sylvia Mah admitted in “The Work of the British Council Library” that there was little need for a large Council library in Penang because of the existence of the Penang Library and the location of the British Council cultural center within the Penang Library. They also noted that periodicals, magazines, pamphlets and reference books about life in Great Britain were heavily used by visitors to the cultural center.\textsuperscript{367}

The significance of the USIS Library in Penang was that it forced the British Council to step outside of its institutes and libraries in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and take notice of both the literacy and cultural needs and wants of the Penang Library and its library community. As Edward Lim Huck Tee noted in Libraries in West Malaysia and Singapore the USIS libraries in the colony of Malaysia not only advanced American propaganda efforts during the Cold War but also introduced the concept of a free library service to the indigenous elite and masses.\textsuperscript{368} From the establishment of the British Council Library in Kuala Lumpur in 1949 to the founding of the British Council Cultural Center in Penang in May 1952, the Penang Library was largely ignored by the British Council. The arrival of the USIS Library on the island brought the Penang Library to the direct attention of the agency and laid the foundation for an attempt by the British Council to assume control of the library on the eve of Malaysian independence.

\textsuperscript{365} BW 104/3 Robert K. Brady to Charles Wilmot, 10 October 1952.
\textsuperscript{366} BW 104/3 Penang Centre: Proposals for Expansion, 15 November 1957.
British Council Takeover Bid of 1957

As the British colonial government and the Malaysian nationalist movements drew up the terms of the Malaysian Constitution in March 1951, plans were afoot among the British Council leadership in Malaysia to take control of the Penang Library and convert it into a public library. J.P. Lucas, the British Council Representative in the Federation of Malaysia, argued the pros and cons of such a move. For Lucas three of the more noteworthy advantages to be gained from this acquisition were:

(a) The acquisition, rent free, of quarters suitable for development into a Council Centre, in a dignified, well-sited building.
(b) Such a Centre would give the Council, for the first time, worthwhile facilities to offer to the Penang community in addition to the good advice and precept to which it is at present largely and inevitably confined.
(c) The Council would be provided with an already existing library of some 20,000 books together with a pleasing reading and periodicals room which has successfully attracted the interest of a considerable proportion of Penang’s juveniles.369

As much as the advantages to acquiring the Penang Library appeared to be sound, the disadvantages of such an acquisition looked equally daunting.

(a) Considerable financial commitments, both, capital and recurrent would be involved.
(b) The library buildings are old and said to be due for demolition; but this is unlikely to occur within the next decade, and, when it does, the Municipality will be forced to build new premises.
(c) It is appreciated that Council policy is to shed rather than to accept new library responsibilities in Commonwealth territories. Yet the special circumstances of Malaysia, haunted by the experience gained from the Council’s Library in Kuala Lumpur indicated that this is an

369 BW 104/3 Penang: Premises, 12 May 1957.
area where such a policy should not be too rigidly applied; in Penang, both expediency and local policy combine in favour of the project.\textsuperscript{370}

Lucas admitted the toughest aspect of his scheme was to get an agreement in principle between the British Council, the Colonial Office and the new Malaysian government prior to the announced Malaysian independence date of 31 August 1957. By arriving at such an agreement in so timely a fashion, Lucas admitted that “If agreement in principle is reached in London before Independence Day…the Resident Commissioner is prepared to recommend that the premises shall be allotted rent-free to the British Council in a form of agreement which would be binding on succeeding governments whose future disposition cannot at present be foreseen. Decision is therefore a matter of urgency.”\textsuperscript{371}

After reviewing Lucas’ scheme Richard Seymour, the Controller of the Overseas “A” Division of the British Council, cautioned Lucas against any attempt by the British Council to acquire the Penang Library. “We appreciate your anxiety to get suitable premises for the Council in Penang but we are very doubtful indeed about the wisdom of your proposal…This is almost precisely the reverse of what ought to be happening as Malaya achieves independence, and there can be no question but that the proper solution would be for the Municipality to take over this Library and to modify its policy, etc. to suit local requirements.”\textsuperscript{372} The supreme irony of this situation was that two years prior to this British Council takeover bid, the British and indigenous elite who subscribed to the Penang Library voted during their annual general meeting on 23 March 1955 to convert the Penang Library into a public library. What stopped the resolution from being enacted were the objections of the Straits Settlements Government and the Municipal Council of Georgetown. “The Straits Settlements Government replied it could not agree to the proposal if additional financial responsibility was involved. The Municipal Resident replied that the memorandum from the Committee was considered by the Standing Committee on Finance and General Purposes and that a motion in support was moved at a Council Meeting but failed to find a seconder.”\textsuperscript{373}

\textsuperscript{370} Ibid, 12 May 1957.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid, 12 May 1957.
\textsuperscript{372} BW 104/3 Richard Seymour to J.P. Lucas, 20 June 1957.
\textsuperscript{373} Penang Library, “Penang Library.” \textit{Malayan Library Group Newsletter} 1, (April 1956), 75.
So the British Council was unwilling to acquire the Penang Library for political reasons, the Straits Settlements Government was unwilling to acquire it for economic reasons and the Municipal Council was unwilling to adopt the Penang Library for procedural reasons. Where did this abandonment leave the Penang Library on the eve of Malaysian independence? All of these failed suitors left the Penang Library during the mid-twentieth century much as it was during the late nineteenth century but with a single exception. The Penang Library still served as a subscription library for the diminishing colonizer and growing colonized elite. But now it was under the joint control of the Education Department of the Malaysian Federal Government and the Penang Library Committee of Management, and engaged in community outreach throughout the island of Penang.


From 1945 to 1962 the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica underwent a dramatic reorganization from a lending library which entertained its subscribers with fictional works into a repository which informed its subscribers with scientific information. Though change swirled all around it from the Bateson Plan of 1945 to the passage of the Jamaica Library Service Act of 1949, the General Library still continued its main function of meeting the recreational and information needs of its subscribers. For the year 1947 to 1948 the General Library boasted a collection of 26,146 volumes, a membership of 4,575 subscribers and required 5 shillings from subscribing members and 1 guinea from sustaining members. For the year 1951 to 1952 the General Library experienced an across-the-board increase in its volumes and membership despite rising operational costs and frozen levels of grant support from the colonial government. Its collection increased to 30,199 volumes, and it suffered a drop in membership to 4,200 subscribers yet maintained its previous fees for subscribing and sustaining members. By the year 1954 to 1955, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica experienced a sharp drop in the volumes it carried to 25,333 due to a weeding of its collection, a modest rise in membership to 4,269 and a constant charge in its membership fees.  

374 This information can be found within these annual reports: Institute of Jamaica. *Annual Report of the Institute of Jamaica April 1st April, 1947-March 31st, 1948*. Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1948, 4;
In September 1948 A.S.A. Bryant, the Director of the Jamaica Library Service, published a progress report on the development of the island-wide library service from its inception under the Bateson Plan in 1945. Within a document entitled *A Report On The Organization of the Jamaica Library Service*, Bryant embraced the tenet of the Bateson Plan that called for the transfer of the General Library to the control of the Island Library Board and to serve as a nucleus collection for the future Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library. However, he was sympathetic to the needs of the Board of Governors on the execution of this transfer.

The present writer endorses Miss Bateson’s suggestions but feels that opportunity should be made for the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica to express their views on the subject...Certainly no steps should be taken to upset present arrangements until there is (a) some measure of financial security for whatever is to replace them and (b) reasonable financial provision and adequate staff is left to the Institute to enable it to continue the remarkable functions it will still perform.  

As much as Bryant wanted this library conversion to take place, he did not want to destroy the Institute of Jamaica to do it. He was perfectly content with executing a patient and orderly transition of the General Library to the Island Library Board only when the board was ready to receive it. The first steps toward this preparation began two years later. On 16 July 1950 A.S.A. Bryant was invited to attend a meeting of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica. The Board asked Bryant that in light of the fact that an understanding had been reached in which the collection of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica would be turned over to the Island Library Board, it was uncertain as to how and when this transition was going to be implemented and wanted his thoughts on the matter. Bryant responded that since the Island Library Board was completely committed to public library development outside of Kingston it was

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375 BW 41/2 A.S.A. Bryant to British Council Books Department, 16 January 1950.
impossible for them to assume any financial responsibility for the Institute of Jamaica.

He further recommended C. Bernard Lewis, an American Rhodes Scholar, be held temporarily responsible for the library activities of the Institute of Jamaica. Along with three other recommendations and the subsequent approval of the Board of Governors, the British Council and the Island Library Board, C. Bernard Lewis assumed direct control over the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica.

Once Lewis achieved the directorship, he and the Board of Governors implemented a series of changes to prepare the General Library for its future transition. In 1951 Lewis reorganized, weeded and replaced most of the books in the collection with cheap editions. On 12 January 1953 he launched a four week re-cataloging project of the General Library’s collection which was still ongoing by the time he filed his annual report of the Institute of Jamaica on 27 March 1953. And in early 1953 membership to the Institute of Jamaica was redefined by the Board of Governors as membership to the General Library thus allowing all other facilities—the art gallery, the museum, the lecture hall and the archives—to be made available free of charge to the Jamaican masses and the European non-elite.

During October 1953 the Board of Governors also served notice to its membership that after 30 September 1954 the postal service to subscribers outside of the Parish of Kingston and St. Andrew would cease and they should contact their parish library to maintain this service. In 1954 when the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library came into operation, Lewis did not transfer the entire General Library over to the new public library system. Instead, he purged the General Library of 2,500 volumes of fiction and donated them to the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library. No objections were raised by this amendment to the Bateson Plan and by 1960 this collection transfer and the Jamaican Parliament compelled the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica to adopt a new role and function.

In August 1951, the Jamaican Parliament passed The Preservation and Registration of Copies of Books Law which designated the Institute of Jamaica as the depository library for the colony and mandated the institution to receive one copy of each book published in Jamaica.\(^{379}\) Once the General Library surrendered its entire fiction section to the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library three years later, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica became a repository for academic, scientific and reference materials on the island of Jamaica. By 1960 the General Library was described in the *Handbook of Jamaica* as an institution which, “concentrates on reference material and special collections and no longer stocks light fiction.”\(^{380}\) This change of status from a lending library into a repository signaled the end of the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica as a site for entertainment and a return to its original function of providing scholarly and scientific information to its subscribers. While the General Library retreated into its past to determine its future, the Lagos Library retreated into itself to hold onto its present.

**The Lagos Library (1945-1960)**

The Lagos Library was the most retrenched and isolated of the three subscription libraries during the period of subscription library autonomy. During the 1940s the library was an active participant in a plan by the British Council to create a national library for Nigeria. At the same time, it found itself at the center of one of the most pivotal philosophical battles of subscription and public library development at that time.

The struggle began on 3 February 1945 at a committee meeting between representatives of the Nigerian colonial government, the Lagos Library and the British Council over the future role the British Council would play in Nigerian public library

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development. William Miller MacMillan, Chief Representative for West Africa, representing the interest of the British Council at the meeting

Outlined the policy of the British Council pointing out that it was concerned with assisting the well-educated members of the Community, European and African. The ‘well-educated’ might be defined as those who were capable of appreciating the higher levels of culture, literacy, artistic or professional. With the lower levels the Council could not directly concern itself, though these might benefit indirectly by the Council’s activities.  

MacMillan’s comments were immediately challenged by members of the committee. Some argued that his policy was too restrictive in assisting only the British and indigenous elite. They questioned the wisdom of providing aid to those who apparently could help themselves. They also exhorted that the lower echelons of the colonizer and colonized elite lacked both the financial and intellectual means to prosper under such a policy and it was they who desperately needed the British Council’s help. MacMillan staunchly reiterated his position and declared that the cultural needs of the lower rank had to be satisfied by a local effort. But MacMillan was not completely indifferent to the plight of the lower echelons of the indigenous elite. He did offer to the committee a conciliatory stance on this matter,

Turning to the matter of Libraries, Professor MacMillan explained that the restriction of the Council’s direct activities to the ‘highest level’ would not preclude the bestowal of advice, and the lending of books to ‘provincial’ libraries in such places as Ibadan, Onitsha or Jos...The Committee welcomed this statement. The Lagos Library, in relation to the British Council, would thus be treated as a ‘provincial’ library, though owing to its proximity to the Central Institute, it would actually be in close touch than the other libraries with this body.

381 BW 8/1 Minutes of Committee convened by the Director of Education at the instance of the Chief Secretary to consider the policy of the British Council in Nigeria, with special reference to the provision of Libraries, 3 February 1945.
382 Ibid, 3 February 1945.
383 Ibid, 3 February 1945.
Though the committee meeting adjourned in good order and everyone appeared satisfied with the results, MacMillan’s statement sparked a series of questions that would plague the British Council’s role in Nigerian public library development: Should the British Council serve the needs of only the British and indigenous elite? Or should they provide access to the European non-elite, the Nigerian masses and those among the British and indigenous elite who could not afford them? And how would the economic, political, social and cultural welfare of the colony be served by such a restrictive policy? Though these fundamental questions were already answered by Sir Alan Burns when he created The Lagos Library in 1932, they still dogged the British Council in its dealings with the Lagos Library during the mid-1940s.

In a memorandum from Norman Lloyd Williams, British Council Representative for Nigeria, to MacMillan, Williams intimated that a great deal of favor could be bestowed upon the Lagos Library and its subscribers if they agreed to unite their collection with that of the Tom Jones Library, the Henry Carr Library and the British Council Library in Lagos.

To confirm our conversation of Monday regarding our relations with the Lagos Library and the setting up of the Nigerian National Library: we agreed on the following proposal…that existing members of the Lagos Library should get full use of whatever National Library offered: that is to say, the membership fee of the National Library would be the same as the present Lagos Library subscription 30/-, members having access not only to the books at present belonging to the Library, but also to all the others in the National Library, which would be properly organized and cared for under the supervision of a European Librarian provided by the British Council.

This proposed privilege that would have been bestowed upon the subscribers of the Lagos Library did have its limits, “At present three persons are allowed to club together to pay the Lagos Library subscription of 30/-, each person being allowed to borrow one book instead of the normal three books. These persons would, presumably, be excluded from the institution described above, but would be eligible for the Town

384 BW 8/1 Norman Lloyd Williams to William Miller MacMillan 8 March 1945.
Council Reading-Room and Library, and through that would have access to all the books in the National Library.”

Though the year wore on and the British Council continued its negotiations with the Lagos Library and its subscription library counterparts, these talks began to deteriorate by early July 1945 and by the end of that year the idea of creating a national library for Nigeria was tabled due to a sustained lack of interest and will by the parties involved. When the debate over building a national library began again in 1948, the Lagos Library was omitted from contributing to the planning process. One reason for this omission could have been that D. Gurney, Director of the Lagos Library, and the rest of the Lagos Library management committee may have realized that the inclusion of their subscription library into a larger national library could have extinguished the autonomy of their institution. Had the merger taken place, its subscribers would have enjoyed membership privileges which others would not have possessed.

On the other hand, another reason why the Lagos Library may have been excluded from the second attempt to craft a national library would have been the desires of the subscribers to have an institution solely for themselves. While any Nigerian national library could have been a subscription library had it come into existence during the 1940s, the subscription could have been set so low that it would have allowed the lower echelons of the British and indigenous elite—maybe even the upper echelons of the European non-elite and the Nigerian masses—to use the facility. At a second glance, a possible merger of the Lagos Library with the Tom Jones Library, the British Council Library in Lagos and the Henry Carr Library may not have been perceived by Lagos Library subscribers to be in their best interest. Regardless of the rationale of the Lagos Library leadership, the National Library of Nigeria did not come into existence until 1965. After 1945, the Lagos Library began a long policy of retrenchment which during the 1950s witnessed the closure of its sub-libraries, the consolidation of its services and the reorganization of its collection.

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385 Ibid, 8 March 1945.
The Other Nigerian Subscription Libraries

The Lagos Library was not the only Nigerian subscription library undergoing retrenchment from the mid 1940s to the early 1950s—The Tom Jones Library and the Lagos Municipal Library confronted financial and organizational retrenchment as well. Erected on 23 March 1930, the Tom Jones Library was funded as part of a £8,000 charitable endowment from a Nigerian businessman who wanted to create a subscription library, a reading room and a public hall in Lagos.\(^{386}\) Under the leadership of Rita Akaje Macaulay who served as Honorary Librarian, the Tom Jones Library acquired a collection of 1,300 volumes and charged a fee of 2 shillings and 6 pence for the usage of the collection. In 1933 the library secured an additional set of fifty volumes, chiefly duplicates, from the Lagos Library.\(^{387}\) After Macaulay applied and failed to secure a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Tom Jones Library entered into a long period of financial retrenchment exacerbated by competition from the Lagos Library, the Lagos Municipal Library and by rising maintenance costs. By 1945 the Tom Jones Library was housed in a dilapidated building and under consideration by the British Council to be absorbed into a national library for Nigeria along with the Lagos Library, the Henry Carr Library and the British Council Library in Lagos.\(^{388}\)

The Lagos Municipal Library experienced a similar period of retrenchment which was financial and organizational in nature. In a joint venture between the British Council and the Lagos Town Council, the Lagos Public Library opened on 7 August 1946. The Lagos Town Council was tasked with the responsibility of providing the premises, reading materials and staff for the library while the British Council provided a qualified librarian to head the library. Though the Lagos Public Library charged a semi-annual membership fee of 2 shillings and 6 pence, the British Council and the Lagos Town Council also contributed £3,000 and £2,750 respectively for library maintenance from 1944 to 1950.\(^{389}\)

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\(^{386}\) West Africa (Lagos), 20 June 1931.
The Lagos Public Library experienced financial and organizational retrenchment when the Definition Document issued by the Colonial Office on 9 August 1948 compelled the British Council to withdraw its financial support of the Lagos Public Library and concluded its joint venture with the Lagos Town Council. By April 1950 the Lagos Town Council assumed complete managerial and financial control over the library and struggled to keep its doors open without British Council aid. By 1952, the Lagos Public Library had recovered from this brief retrenchment as the Lagos Town Council changed the library’s name to the Lagos Municipal Library.  

In 1953 the Lagos Municipal Library had a membership of 935, a book collection of 5,903 volumes and an annual expenditure of £3,000. The following year, the library grew in membership to 1,150, increased its book collection to 7,132 volumes and raised its level of expenditure to £4,192. Though The Tom Jones Library, The Lagos Library and The Lagos Municipal Library experienced a period of retrenchment, they did not all share the same fate. The Tom Jones Library failed to survive its retrenchment, it was acquired by the Nigerian colonial government and came under consideration to be absorbed into a new national library. The Lagos Municipal Library survived its retrenchment and it retained its autonomy as a subscription library beyond Nigerian independence. As it will be revealed, the Lagos Library never escaped its retrenchment.

In July 1945 the Lagos Library was still an independent, self-supporting subscription library with a membership of at least 300 subscribers, a collection of over 10,000 books and a subscription of 30 shillings. In a library survey of British West Africa conducted in 1956, Harold Lancour, an American Professor of Library Science at the University of Illinois, observed of the Lagos Library, “It is still operating, now in attractive quarters in a wing of the new Lagos Museum. The collection is small but the Lagos Library provides good, general, up-to-date books to its very limited membership.”

Five years after independence, the Directory of Lagos Libraries recorded that the Lagos Library had 200 registered members, those in class A paying 10

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shallings a month and a deposit of £1 and those in class B paying 4 shillings and a deposit of 10 shillings. The library contained over 7,000 volumes which largely focused upon history, travel, general knowledge and fiction.³⁹³

Though a possibility existed that the Lagos Library could have been inculcated into a larger national library for Nigeria during the 1940s, the institution remained intact and was well cared for by its subscribers. The library retrenched in terms of its outreach services, membership and collection size. This retrenchment permitted the Lagos Library to survive relatively intact the many social changes and political contests over Nigerian public library development prior to independence. It also contributed to stagnation and prevented the institution from growing beyond its original mandate. Nigerian public and academic librarianship was expanding during the 1950s and 1960s, special librarianship was receiving support from the public and private firms that hosted them, and mosque libraries in Northern Nigeria were growing with every new mosque built and waqf endowment secured. The Lagos Library served as a constant though fading light in an expanding spectrum of library development.

The Colonial Subscription Library as Place

The three subscription libraries under study during this period—the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Lagos Library—were in a constant state of transition. All of these institutions bore many similarities in role and function to what they provided to their subscribers prior to World War II. As the post-war period wore on, the roles, functions and collections of these libraries altered at a quickening pace.

Though the Penang Library was ravaged by the Japanese occupation, it was still a cherished institution by its subscribers. The Penang Library was still a place of comfort and entertainment for the British and indigenous elite yet it began to reach out to the European non-elite and the indigenous masses. For example in 1948, it held two public exhibitions, the Mulberry Harbor Exhibition and the Exhibition of Water Colours by

local artists. In 1949 the Penang Library in cooperation with the Assistant Custodian of Enemy Property in Penang displayed for public identification seventeen albums of old photographs to be claimed by their rightful owners. And in 1955 the Penang Library sponsored with the Singapore Art Society an exhibition of Book Jackets from the University of Malaya Library, the Raffles Library and the Singapore Art Society. These activities increased the number of visitors among the British elite, indigenous elite, European non-elite and indigenous masses who otherwise might not have come to the library. It also allowed the Penang Library to meet a multiplicity of social and cultural needs which could have further increased its attraction as a cultural and social center for the island of Penang.

Like the Penang Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica was undergoing a time of transition in the post-war world. Prior to 1954, it still served as a cultural center, social nexus and a site of frenetic academic, scientific and cultural activity that it had been during the interwar years. Subscribers still came to be entertained more so than informed by the collection the General Library provided. After 1954 when the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library came into existence, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica became more of a repository for factual knowledge than a subscription library for entertainment purposes. By purging its fiction section and replacing it with reference materials such as United Nations publications and American cultural periodicals, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica became a carbon copy of the West India Reference Library minus the special collections devoted to the West Indies.

This role change also gave the General Library a Janus-like character that lasted beyond Jamaica’s independence. On the one hand, the library was open to the European non-elite and the indigenous masses who could peruse its collection free of charge. On the other hand, the General Library became more insular because subscribers were the only ones who could borrow these materials. And with a subscription rate that rose from £1 1 shilling per year for sustaining members in 1947 to £3 per year for sustaining

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members in 1960, the General Library was still an elitist institution primarily catering to the needs of the colonizer and colonized elite.\textsuperscript{395} The shift from a subscription library to a reference library may have been a welcome sight to professionals, civil servants and politicians who desired information over entertainment. This role change and the open door policy of the General Library also may have been viewed by some subscribers as a violation of a private sanctuary that was once their own.

Unlike the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica, the Lagos Library as a place for subscribers was an extreme model of insularity and retrenchment. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Lagos Library sponsored sub-libraries in an effort to reach the British and indigenous elite communities throughout Nigeria’s urban centers. By the 1950s, this service was discontinued and the Lagos Library exclusively began to satisfy the entertainment and information needs of its Lagos subscribers. As William John Harris, the New Zealander Director of the University College Library, Ibadan, noted, “The members came entirely from the civil service and the professions and no attempt seems ever to have been made to broaden the library’s basis...It has never employed a professional librarian, its staff have been concerned only with the most routine and non-professional procedures, the charging and discharging of loans.”\textsuperscript{396}

Though it was still a place the colonizer and colonized elite cherished, it was also protected by the colonial government who provided the most pristine, comfortable and exclusive locations for it to function. For example, its first location was in the heart of the colonial government’s office square in Lagos, its second location was in a custom house near the harbor, and its third location prior to independence was in the Lagos Museum. The Lagos Library was so prized by the indigenous elite that even after independence it was still well-cared for when it was finally moved from the Trade Fair on Victoria Island to three converted garages in the Federal Palace, the top hotel in Lagos.\textsuperscript{397}


Even in the aftermath of Nigerian independence, the Lagos Library never lost its exclusiveness, privilege and charm.

A similar observation can be made for the clubs and hill stations of India during the last decades of the British Raj. Some members of the European non-elite and the Indian elite deemed the clublands policy of ‘whiteness’ to be obsolete and outdated. “So for many of the Europeans arriving in India during the Second World War, a great number of whom were quite diverse in their backgrounds and in their political orientations, the ‘stuffy clubs’ of Anglo India held less and less attraction…Many of the Indians who were now eligible for club membership, moreover, were equally disenchanted by colonial clubland.”

Another reason for this rejection of colonial clubland by the Indian elite was the simple fact that access to power had shifted from the “white-only” clubs of the departing British elite to the “mixed-race” clubs of an Indian-elite preparing itself to assume power. In the aftermath of independence, the British clubs became the purview of British expatriates or racially-mixed social environments for high-ranking Indian civil servants and leaders. It must be noted that while the clubs of India revolved around the colonial and indigenous elite’s access to power, the subscription libraries of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria revolved around maintaining that power. This contrast will be analyzed in the concluding chapter of this study.

For the hill stations of India, the British abandonment of their social enclaves was a direct result of lower transportation costs in trips to Great Britain, shorter travel times with the opening of the Suez Canal and the entry of the indigenous elite into the hill stations. “Thus, the Indian upper and middle classes’ incursions into the hill stations were in a certain sense as much a consequence as a cause of British flight. They filled the vacuum left by the British, purchasing British property, occupying British cottages, enrolling their children in British schools. And in so doing they made the hill stations their own.”

This abandonment of the hill stations by the British and the abandonment of the clubs by the European non-elite and the Indian elite also mirrored a growing

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The End of Subscription Library Autonomy

The period of subscription library autonomy varied with each colony. For Malaysia, it lasted no more than twelve years. In the case of Nigeria, it continued for fifteen years. And in the case of Jamaica, it lasted for seventeen years. The peak of this period also varied as well and was unique to each colony. While subscription library autonomy revealed these libraries regaining some measure of control which they lost when they were co-opted, it also highlighted changes in their own roles and functions. In 1955 the Penang Library executed a complete departure from its elitist origins and established itself as a true cultural center for the colonized elite and masses. In 1946 when the British Council’s bid for the Lagos Library to be transferred into a larger national library failed, the subscription library slipped into a long phase of retrenchment and isolation. In 1954 the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica made a substantial shift from being a subscription library that informed and entertained the British and indigenous elite into a repository that not only informed the colonizer and colonized elite but also the European non-elite and the indigenous masses.

In each of the colonies on their respective roads to independence, the colonial mindset gave way to nationalist thought and the fruits of Macaulayism yielded a colonized elite prepared to seize the reins of power yet unprepared or unwilling to make library development a high priority on the eve of independence. For example, in the colony of Jamaica when Norman Manley became the Prime Minister of Jamaica in 1959 and the People’s National Party controlled the Jamaican legislature, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica still received government funding and charged a subscription fee for its services though it was surrounded by an island full of state-supported public libraries. Manley and his supporters possessed the power to convert the General Library into a public library and do away with this vestige of colonialism—but they chose not to do it. Why? In the British colony of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman

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became Prime Minister and the Alliance Party assumed control of the Malaysian Parliament in 1955 yet it has already been demonstrated that neither the British Council nor the Federal Government nor the Municipal Government of Georgetown wanted to take control of the Penang Library. Why? Meanwhile, in the colony of Nigeria, Alkoyi Abduharm Tafawa Balewa became the first Prime Minister of Nigeria in 1959 with the National Council of Nigeria and the Northern People’s Congress dominating the Nigerian Parliament yet they were reluctant to convert the Lagos Library into a public library or allow it to be absorbed into the National Library of Nigeria when it was erected in 1965.401 Why?

For these leaders and their respective administrations were these subscription libraries a guilty pleasure or a minor matter to be set aside in a sea of more pressing political, social and economic problems? When one examines the deeds and words of these leaders and their followers and their vehemence to wash away the stain of colonialism, it is no small irony that these subscription libraries continued to receive their aid, protection and support.

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CHAPTER 5
EDUCATION, NATIONALISTS AND LIBRARIANSHIP

In Chapter 1, this study determined the origins of British colonial education as a product of Christian missionary work and Islamic schooling. It also assessed the level of support colonial officials provided for the propagation of agricultural and technical training within the British colonies of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria. In Chapter 2, this text recounted the official debate among British Parliamentarians over the value of vocational and liberal arts education in the colonies within a larger debate on the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1940. It also explored the preference of British educators for the development of liberal arts education over vocational education in the colonies and documented the struggle between those educators and colonial governors over this very issue. And in Chapter 3, this study revisited the liberal arts-vocational education debate among British Members of Parliament who were arguing the merits of passing the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill of 1945 into law.

Having presented the views of British educators, colonial officials, parliamentarians and government leaders, what view did the nationalists and their political parties adopt on these issues? How did they view colonial education and for that matter colonial librarianship? And how did their stance on colonial educational issues impact upon the development of colonial library policy?

This chapter will seek to answer these questions. First, it will examine the lives of three nationalist leaders—Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, leader of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC); Tunku Abdul Rahman, leader of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO); and Sir William Alexander Bustamante, leader of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)—and their respective stances on education and librarianship. Second, it will explore the platforms of the nationalist parties they led. Third, this chapter will document the status of British colonial education during the twentieth century. And fourth this chapter will assess the impact these nationalist leaders had upon subscription librarianship and the development of public librarianship within their respective colonies. Before an analysis of these issues can be conducted; the history of these post-World War II nationalist movements and their drive towards independence must be provided. This information will establish an historical context within which the
educational platforms of the nationalist movements, the educational views of the nationalists themselves and their stance upon library development can be explored.

**The Colonies (1945-1962)**

With the end of World War II and the British government engaged in gradual decolonization, the colony of Nigeria underwent two major political changes which would shape its future. The first major political change was the emergence of ethnic political parties within the Nigerian nationalist movement. In northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* (War Leader) of Sokoto, led the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) which represented the Hausa and Fulani tribes. In southwestern Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo, a Nigerian lawyer, led the Action Group (AG) which represented the interests of the Yoruba tribe. And in southeastern Nigeria, Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe and Herbert Macaulay led the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons which represented the Igbo tribe. 402 These ethnic political parties not only fought for independence but also jockeyed against each other for positions of power within the future post-colonial government.

The second major political change which occurred in Nigeria took place between 1946 and 1960. During this period the British government created and enacted four constitutions in an effort to prepare Nigeria for independence. In 1946 the Richards Constitution was adopted yet the NCNC rejected it in 1950 because its wording sought to increase the regional differences that existed among Nigerians rather than unify them. In 1951 the British government enacted the Macpherson Constitution which created a balance between legislative institutions and local rulers that respected regional differences in Nigeria while implementing a unifying federal government to oversee the nation. While this constitution was approved by the various Nigerian political parties, it was subsequently revised and replaced with the Lyttleton Constitution in 1954 that strengthened federalism within the future independent government of Nigeria. 403 In 1957 the fourth and last federal constitution was negotiated and enacted with the full


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participation of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Ahmadu Bello representing their respective political parties and the common interests of the Nigerian people. Three years later and after numerous delays due to the political jockeying of the ethnic political parties, Nigeria achieved its independence on 1 October 1960.

With the British reoccupation of Malaysia in 1945, the colonial government’s preparations for de-colonization did not proceed without opposition or violence. The Japanese occupation of Malaysia and the colony’s destitute economic and social conditions exacerbated ethnic differences among the Malay, Chinese and Indian communities. In 1946 Whitehall proposed and enacted—without the consent of the Malaysian people—the Malay Union. This constitution which would have ended the local rule of the Malay rulers, provided a common citizenship for all inhabitants of Malaysia and centralized all of the state governments under a single union government. The Malayan Union so offended the Malaysian community that under the leadership of Dato’ Onn bin Ja’afar, a member of the Johore State Council, the Malaysian elite and masses organized themselves into a political party, the United Malays National Organization, to effectively protest the implementation of the Malayan Union.

Under a storm of protest from both UMNO and the British Parliament, Whitehall in 1947 proposed a plan for establishing a Federation of Malaya which would maintain the position of the Malay rulers and the residency system yet introduce a federal system of government to the Malay states. Despite the opposition the Federation Plan faced from Chinese and Indian political parties such as the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), UMNO approved the new constitution and the Federation of Malaya Agreement was signed in February 1948. This agreement also drew violent opposition from the Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM).

Led by Chin Peng, a former Liaison Officer between the MPAJA and the British military during World War II, the Communist Party of Malaysia sought to remove British colonial rule from Malaysia, dismantle the Federation of Malaya Agreement and convert the colony into a Communist state modeled after China. The British government declared a state of emergency in 1948 which was not lifted until 1960 when the CPM was

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driven out of Malaysia and into neighboring Thailand.\textsuperscript{405} As the guerilla attacks of the CPM were being neutralized by the British military in the early 1950s, the British government continued its preparations for Malaysian independence by encouraging non-Communist Malay, Chinese and Indian politicians to engage in a meaningful social and political dialogue about the future of their state. The end result of these formal and informal talks and the municipal and legislative elections of 1952 and 1954 was the creation and solidification of the Alliance Party between the United Malays National Organization and the Malaysian Chinese Association.

Under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, a Prince of Kedah and a Malaysian barrister, and later joined by MIC, the Alliance Party leadership sought to redistribute the wealth of the colony to achieve an equitable economic balance between the Malays and the Chinese. The Alliance Party also sought to assimilate Chinese and Indian citizens of Malaysia into a unified nation by instituting a national policy of education.\textsuperscript{406} Independence, on the other hand, was still the top priority of the Alliance Party. In 1955 the Alliance Party leadership called for self-government in two years and in early 1957 traveled to London to negotiate for their goal. On 31 August 1957, Malaysia achieved its independence from Great Britain.

After the implementation of the Jamaican Constitution of 1944, the British government continued its policy of gradual de-colonization that would lead to the independence of Jamaica. From the mid-1940s to the late 1960s two political parties frequently traded control of the Jamaican Parliament during a series of popular elections. The first party led by Norman Manley was the PNP which during the 1930s initially sought to reform the colonial government. The second party led by Sir William Alexander Bustamante, leader of the Jamaican Trade Workers and Tradesmen Union, was the Jamaica Labour Party which sought to improve the living and working conditions of the Jamaican masses.\textsuperscript{407} As these political parties struggled to control the Jamaican Parliament, the colonial government amended the Jamaican constitution in 1953, 1955

and 1956 to increase the populace’s participation in the political process from the implementation of universal suffrage to the creation of the first governmental ministries of Jamaica.

Under the promise that they would receive independence as part of a larger geographic union than as an independent state, Jamaica joined nine other British Caribbean colonies to form the West Indies Federation in 1958. Manley, the Chief Minister of Jamaica during this period, supported Jamaica’s entry into the federation. When the financial burden of Jamaica’s membership and the limited number of representatives Jamaica would have in the West Indies Federation’s House of Assembly became known to the Jamaican public, Bustamante opposed Jamaica’s entry into the federation and sought a referendum in 1961. In the referendum more than half of the electorate voted against Jamaica remaining in the West Indies Federation and the nation withdrew in 1962. Later that year, the Jamaica Labour Party won control of the Jamaican Parliament in a popular election, negotiated with the British government for sovereignty and secured their nation’s independence on 6 August 1962.

These struggles for independence were conducted by nationalist leaders who possessed a vision of economic, social, political and cultural development beyond the mere attainment of freedom. Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaysia and Sir William Alexander Bustamante of Jamaica were three such leaders and the stances they and their political parties adopted on education shaped library development in general and subscription librarianship in particular within their respective colonies.

The Nationalist Leaders & Their Movements (1945-1962)

In Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* the aforementioned nationalist leaders and their contemporaries participated in a global pilgrimage in which the indigenous elite attempted to improve their economic status by obtaining civil service positions in the upper echelons of the colonial bureaucracy. For some members of the indigenous elite, vocational and liberal arts education in the British, American and other

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European metropolises served as a route by which their goal could be achieved. For others, the path to a lucrative civil service career passed through colonial vocational schools and multiple civil service postings in different areas of the colony. But as Anderson noted even this path was no less circuitous than the months or years a pilgrim could spend traveling and studying abroad. “Sent out to township A at rank V, he may return to the capital at rank W; proceed to province B at rank X; continue to vice-royalty C at rank Y; and end his pilgrimage in the capital at rank Z.”

Whether one traveled abroad or remained at home, the pilgrimage was defined by three characteristics: It offered no firm ground of respite for its travelers, it often encouraged a member of the indigenous elite to avoid returning home and it offered an opportunity for the pilgrim to interact and share his colonial experiences with other pilgrims. These three factors created an imagined community which established the ideological nexus for the social networking and grass-roots organizing that later gave rise to the nationalist movements. Before an analysis of these movements can be conducted, the lives of their founders and leaders must be assessed to provide an historical context for the origins of these organizations.

Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe was born on 16 November 1904 in the town of Zangeru in northern Nigeria. Azikiwe’s pilgrimage started during his childhood and teenage years when he studied at the Methodist Boys’ High School in Lagos. In early-adulthood, he traveled to the United States and attended Howard University before transferring to Lincoln University and graduating with a bachelor’s degree in 1930. Three years later, he obtained a master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania then returned to Lincoln University and served as an instructor.

Contrary to Anderson’s assessment, Azikiwe not only had a firm ground upon which he could rest but also chose to return to Nigeria in favor of remaining in the United States. Within his autobiography, My Odyssey, Azikiwe outlined his rationale behind his decision.

I thought of the opportunities I would have in America if I obtained the PH D and had a lifelong job of teaching and inspiring young people,

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rubbing shoulders with the best brains of the world, and hobnobbing in the academic cloister. I also thought of the difficulties facing my people in Africa; their inability to appreciate their unlimited opportunities; their ignorance of their latent giant’s strength; and their innocence of the fact that their homeland seemed to them a paradise contrasted with the homeland of their rulers who lived in the temperate zones, where life was one continuous struggle for existence and survival…Then I made my decision to return to Africa. I was ready to continue suffering personal inconvenience, if need be, in order to do for Africa what that continent needed for a renaissance in thought and action.410

Azikiwe’s sense of duty to his people and his qualms over their economic and social plight compelled him to return to Nigeria and challenge the colonial government to reform its economic and social policies.

In March 1934, Azikiwe returned to Africa and worked as an editor for the daily newspaper *The African Morning Post* in Ghana; founded *The West African Pilot* in Nigeria; and launched the Zik Group of Newspapers to spread calls for colonial reform throughout Nigeria. Though he interacted with pilgrims long before he returned to Africa, it was as a newspaper editor that Azikiwe not only interacted with such nationalists as Herbert Macaulay, Ahmadu Bello and Obafemi Awolowo but also contributed to a growing imagined community envisioning a free and independent Nigeria. In 1944 he co-founded the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons with Herbert Macaulay and two years later became the Secretary General of that organization.411

Azikiwe’s view on colonial education mirrored that of the nationalist movement he co-founded. The education platform of the NCNC embraced a policy which called for state ownership of all primary schools to be established in the future and their management by local government councils, an end to the utilization of public funds for the construction of new parochial schools and the assignment of children to schools by

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government education officers on the basis of available facilities.\textsuperscript{412} The goal of this educational policy was to break the hold Christian missionary groups had over education throughout Nigeria, centralize control over Nigerian educational policy and prepare the Nigerian people for self-governance. In a Presidential address to the Sixth Annual Convention of the National Council on Nigeria and the Cameroons held at the Dayspring Hotel in Enugu on 6 January 1954 Azikiwe echoed these sentiments when he declared,

\begin{quote}
The idea of ‘approving’, ‘recognizing’, ‘assisting’, and ‘aiding’ certain schools to the exclusion of others must have been well-conceived but it has outlived its usefulness as a result of the tremendous strides in the field of education in Nigeria in the last two decades. Consequently, we shall abolish all forms of discrimination, whether intentional or not, and we shall establish a State system of certification for the elementary and secondary schools of the Region...We must reiterate that our education must emphasize the principle of \textit{what is right} as distinct from \textit{who is right} in the interplay of social forces.\textsuperscript{413}
\end{quote}

Azikiwe was not the only nationalist leader who placed a primacy on education as an alarm for awakening the indigenous masses to their responsibilities of self-governance and for improving the overall welfare of the colony. Tunku Abdul Rahman in the British colony of Malaysia shared these views as well.

Tunku Abdul Rahman was a prince to the Sultan of Kedah. He was born in the village of Istana Pelamin near the city of Alor Star in the Unfederated Malay State of Kedah on 8 February 1903. Like Azikiwe, Abdul Rahman’s pilgrimage began during his childhood and teenage years when he was educated at the Malay Primary School, Jalan Baharu and the Government English School in Alor Star; the Debsirin School in Bangkok, Thailand; and the Penang Free School in Georgetown. In early adulthood he studied at St. Catherine’s College in the University of Cambridge where he obtained his bachelor’s degree in 1925. Upon his return to Malaysia in 1926, he became the District Officer of the provinces of Kulim and Sungai Petani.


Though he lacked a firm resting place abroad, Abdul Rahman’s noble birth guaranteed him a position of authority within the Malaysian colonial bureaucracy once his studies were completed. Like Azikiwe, he returned to Malaysia out of a sense of duty to improve the economic and social welfare of his people. This sense of duty to his countrymen manifested itself during World War II when “As the Japanese advanced the British wanted to take the Sultan of Kedah, his father to Penang and thence abroad. Accompanied by a health inspector, the Tengku [sic] intercepted the convoy in which his father was traveling and directed him to Kulim because he believed his father’s rightful place was with his people at a time of national emergency.”414

In the aftermath of the global conflict, Abdul Rahman continued to look after the welfare of his people. He passed the bar in 1949 and rose from being a Legal Officer in Alor Star to serving as a Deputy Public Prosecutor in Kuala Lumpur.415 Both as a student in Great Britain and as a barrister in Malaysia, Abdul Rahman interacted with fellow pilgrims such as Tun Abdul Haji Razak, the Secretary of the Malay Society of Great Britain during Abdul Rahman’s presidency of that organization, Dato’ Onn bin Ja’afar and Dato Bukit Gantang, an organizer for the United Malays National Organization, among others to form a nationalist imagined community dedicated to the liberation of Malaysia.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s Abdul Rahman joined the United Malays National Organization and eventually was elected President of the nationalist movement in August 1951 when the founder of the party, Dato’ Onn bin Ja’afar, was forced to resign. Under Abdul Rahman’s leadership, UMNO’s educational policy espoused the maintenance of a separate language-medium school system; the compulsory teaching of Malay and English in all schools; and the eligibility of all schools for government grants-in-aid provided they conformed to UMNO’s educational policy. This policy of Malayanization was designed to establish a common curriculum which would promote a ‘Malayan outlook’ among the non-Malay while respecting the desire of these non-Malay communities to preserve their own language and cultural identity.416 Malayanization was

415 Ibid, XLI-XLIV.
also designed to create the broadest educational opportunities possible for not only the Malay people but also non-Malays as well.

Within his own musings on the broader value of education in his text *Viewpoints* Abdul Rahman confessed,

> Education, at whatever level, can make or unmake a man; in the same way it can make or unmake a nation. Our leaders are well aware of it. And they all ensure that their children receive the best education possible. In contrast, boys in the *kampungs* do not have the same opportunities; my object is to give them the best possible education. I have said that when a good brain is not properly utilized it can be a source of danger to the society and to the country.\(^\text{417}\)

For Abdul Rahman, Malayanization was an education policy designed to not only push Malay culture to the forefront of national life but also to create greater educational and economic opportunities for all citizens of Malaysia. In the British colony of Jamaica, a different agenda was put forth by Sir William Alexander Bustamante on the eve of that island’s independence from the British Empire.

Sir William Alexander Bustamante was born William Alexander Clarke in the town of Hanover, Jamaica on 24 February 1884. Like Azikiwe and Abdul Rahman, Bustamante’s pilgrimage began during his childhood when he was educated at an elementary school in Cacoon and at a district school in Dalmally. During his teenage years he was groomed by his relatives to be a junior overseer on the Belmont plantation which was jointly owned by his extended family. When Bustamante became a young adult he left Jamaica and wandered around the Caribbean taking on a variety of jobs—from a tramway worker in Cuba to a traffic inspector in Panama.\(^\text{418}\) Though he found no firm economic foundation abroad upon which he could build a stable life, Bustamante attempted to return to Jamaica more prosperous than when he departed but he did so with mixed results. “Certainly when he returned finally to Jamaica in 1934, he did not, according to contemporaries, appear notably prosperous, and one wonders whether a man

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of his energy and dynamism would have limited himself to being a lender of money to ‘small people’ had he made a ‘kill’ playing the stock market as he claimed.” Unlike Azikiwe and Abdul Rahman, Bustamante did not return to Jamaica out of a sense of duty to improve the social and economic welfare of his people. He returned to improve his financial status by serving as a money lender until he interested himself in local politics and joined the Jamaica Trade Workers and Tradesman Union rising to the rank of Treasurer by 1937.

His sense of duty to the Jamaican masses emerged during the late 1930s and stood in opposition to the poor working conditions and low compensation his fellow unionists endured under British colonial rule. In the aftermath of the labor strikes of 1938, Bustamante gained control of the Jamaica Trade Workers and Tradesman Union and renamed it the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU). It was in this capacity as a labor union leader that Bustamante interacted with fellow pilgrims Norman Manley, St. William Grant—a fellow labor leader—and J.A.G. Smith—a Jamaican barrister—to comprise a nationalist imagined community at first dedicated to colonial reform but later driven to achieve Jamaican independence. During World War II, he also attached a political wing to the BITU when he organized the Jamaica Labour Party to press the British colonial government for economic, political and social reforms as well as to counter the rise of his cousin and rival Norman Manley the leader of the Peoples’ National Party.

The educational agenda of the Jamaica Labour Party focused upon the development of primary and secondary education throughout the island. The JLP advocated the erection of schools in the remote corners of the island; free books and one hot meal per day for poor school children; free uniforms for school children whose parents were too poor to afford it; better living conditions for school teachers and postmistresses in the parishes; the establishment of technical schools in convenient parts of the parishes for those who could not afford to pay for them and the creation of similar schools for girls where home economics classes could be taught. Aside from his party’s platform, Bustamante’s own views on education are not well-documented.

419 Ibid, 53, 60.
However, a Bustamante biographer George E. Eaton offered a plausible explanation for his subject’s lack of candor upon this issue,

The fact of the matter is that Bustamante was a man of the moment, reacting to situations and events as they happened…His duty as a leader of the people, therefore, was to try and improve their material lot, however modest, not in the distant future but in the present and within the limits set by the country’s resources. Thus, while education for the children of the poor and the working classes was important, higher wages or incomes, and derivatively, bread and butter for their parents and indeed for the entire family were more important in the short run. This same realism and pragmatism governed his approach as a labour leader.\(^{421}\)

Education for Bustamante was not a bread and butter issue of the present such as raising the minimum wage was but education was a secondary issue of the future. The benefits of which would be reaped by future generations rather than the present one.

Considering the educational stances of these nationalist leaders and their political parties, why was it necessary for them to adopt these positions at all? What was the condition of colonial education in Malaysia, Nigeria and Jamaica that would warrant these calls for reform? The reason for these reformist policies resided within the stagnation of colonial education which was relatively unchanged since it was first introduced in the aforementioned colonies during the nineteenth century.

**The Stagnation of Colonial Education**

When Abdul Rahman, Bustamante and Azikiwe came to power within their respective colonies during the late 1940s and the early 1950s, they confronted a colonial educational system which had not fundamentally changed since its inception a hundred years ago. As outlined in Chapter 1 of this study, primary and secondary colonial education was still the purview of Protestant and Catholic missionary groups and Islamic schools providing Christian-oriented rote instruction and Quranic memorization and recitation to all who attended these institutions. Education departments organized by the

colonial governments did exist, but their function was to standardize Christian education and operate government schools. As Colin G. Wise noted in *A History of Education in British West Africa* “Government schools were opened in important centers where there was inadequate mission education. The policy was to fill in gaps rather than compete with the missions, in much the same way as the English board schools had been built only where there were not enough voluntary schools…The native administration and private schools were not an important part of the system…” Colonial education departments also adopted a laissez-faire policy towards native administration schools, private schools and Islamic schools as they moved from merely standardizing education during the mid-nineteenth century to formal control over education during the twentieth century.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this formal control by the colonial education departments manifested itself through their endorsement of vocational education. This form of education was designed to provide agricultural training to improve the cash crop yields of the colonies and technical training to meet the manpower needs of the colonial bureaucracy. For most of the twentieth century, a liberal arts education in the colonies was practically non-existent and only came in the aftermath of two changes—the rise of communal schooling and the creation of education commissions.

The first change was communal schooling which allowed both sexual and racial integration within some primary, secondary and vocational schools within the British colonies. Clive Whitehead in “Education in British Colonial Dependencies, 1919-39: A Re-Appraisal” observed, “English-medium schools were almost invariably multi-racial because people of all races recognized the economic value of an English education, but there were relatively few of them and the high cost of fees ensured that all but the wealthy and those fortunate enough to win scholarships were excluded. Most children attended communal schools but the arrangement was not a deliberate act of policy by the British.” Some of the more notable examples of communal schooling were the Penang Free School which integrated Malay, Indian and Chinese students within its ranks, the St.

Jago High School in Spanish Town, Jamaica which became co-educational in 1954 and the Higher College at Yaba which from its inception accepted Hausa, Igbo, Fulani and Yoruba students into its classrooms.\textsuperscript{424} It is not known when the majority of children within these respective colonies attended these communal schools. What is known is that communal schooling was never endorsed by the British colonial governments because it eroded their divide-and-rule strategy. Communal schooling was a twentieth century innovation which largely occurred in urban areas.

The second change which occurred was the metropolitan sanctioning of British education commissions to determine the state of colonial education during the 1930s and 1940s. In the aftermath of the passage of CDA 1929, the British government needed current information on areas of need as it pertained to not only education but also the social and economic welfare of the colonies in general. In an attempt to economically and socially develop the areas they controlled, the British metropolis authorized a series of fact-finding commissions throughout the British colonies—particularly in the area of higher education.

For the colony of Malaysia, the Colonial Office tapped William H. McLean, a British educator, to lead a fact-finding commission to assess the current status of Malaysian higher education, to identify areas of need and to provide recommendations for the improvement of Malaysian training colleges and technical institutions. From 7 October 1938 to 2 December 1938 the McLean Commission traveled throughout the urban and rural areas of the colony and successfully completed its assessment of higher education in Malaysia.

The commission recommended the fusion of the Raffles College and the Medical College at Singapore into a University College of Malaya, the creation of an academic library system to support the research and teaching interests of the faculty, the installation of teaching and equipment improvements in the Technical School at Kuala Lumpur, the

abolition of departmental libraries and the creation of a single library building at Raffles College in Singapore to name a few among several. The findings of this commission not only led to improvements within the existing Malaysian higher educational system but also instituted the creation of the University of Malaya in 1949 which later split into two separate entities—the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur and the University of Singapore ten years later.

In the case of Nigeria, the Colonial Office authorized Walter Elliot, MP for Glasgow Kelvingrove, to head a fact-finding commission to report on the current status of higher education in British West Africa and to provide recommendations regarding future university development in that area. After a four month examination of higher education facilities in British West Africa, the Elliot Commission published a report on its findings and provided a series of recommendations for improving Nigerian higher education and academic librarianship.

These recommendations included the creation of a university college at Ibadan, Nigeria and an academic library to support it; the installation of schools of medicine, dentistry, agriculture, forestry and civil health; the creation of faculties of arts and sciences; the founding of a teacher training school to be contained within the new university college and the establishment of a West African Advisory Council on Higher Education to confront local challenges towards improving higher education throughout the British West African colonies to name a few recommendations. The end result of this assessment for Nigeria was the founding of the University of Ibadan and its library system in 1948.

In the case of Jamaica, Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, tasked James C. Irvine, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of St. Andrews, to lead a fact-finding commission to assess the current status of higher education in the British West Indies, identify areas of need and provide recommendations to improve higher education facilities throughout the region. For three months, the Irvine

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427 Ibid, 74, 75, 125.
Commission traveled across Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica and British Guiana gathering information about higher education facilities operating throughout the British West Indies.

Upon the completion of their mission in April 1944, the commission filed its report with the Colonial Office and recommended the immediate establishment of a University of the West Indies with a university college as the cornerstone of the institution; the centralization of the University of the West Indies as a single residential entity; the establishment of a regional academic library system to support the research and teaching mission of the institution, and funding for the construction of the institution to be borne by the British government. The findings of this commission led to the creation of the University of the West Indies with the main campus located at Mona Valley, Jamaica in 1948 and branch campuses established at St. Augustine, Trinidad in 1960 and Cave Hill, Barbados in 1963.

For the whole of the British West Indies, these commissions not only increased the economic and social welfare of the indigenous populations but also increased their educational opportunities as well. For the whole of the British Empire, L.J. Lewis observed in “Higher Education in the Oversea Territories 1948-58” that the end result of the commissions’ work were institutions which produced men and women ready to take their responsible place within their respective societies. “In all territories they represent the beginnings of a new stream of intellectual and administrative manpower to the advantage of the new nations and the comity of nations as a whole.”

Beyond its benefits to colonial education, it was these higher education commissions and several other primary and secondary counterparts which set the precedent for the implementation of colonial library surveys such as the Wrong-Vischer Survey of Nigeria in 1939, the Bateson Survey of Jamaica in 1945 and the Ferguson Survey of Malaysia in 1950. In addition to these library surveys and the changes they helped implement within colonial librarianship, the nationalist leaders within Jamaica,

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Malaysia and Nigeria placed varying degrees of importance upon colonial library development.

The Three Nationalist Leaders and Colonial Library Development

While the education position of the nationalist leaders and their political parties were generally well known through both their speeches and platforms respectively, their position on library development within their respective colonies were less documented and often couched within their stance on education. For example, Tunku Abdul Rahman rarely delivered a full speech endorsing library development as its main topic and often relegated the matter in question to the Malaysian Ministry of Education and the National Library Committee. Though the results of the Ferguson Survey were published in 1950, the Malaysian colonial government never acted upon the library survey’s recommendations. Despite repeated calls by the Persatuan Perpustakaan Malaysia (The Library Association of Malaysia) for the Malaysian colonial government to address public library development, the Ministry of Education finally did so ten years after independence.

In 1967 the Persatuan Perpustakaan Malaysia, the UNESCO National Council for Malaysia and the Asia Foundation commissioned Hedwig Anuar, the Director of the National Library of Singapore, to retrace Kate D. Ferguson’s steps, undertake another library survey of Malaysia and report her findings to the National Library Committee. Only after Anuar’s report, Blueprint for Public Library Development in Malaysia, was published later that year did the Malaysian government begin to endorse her recommendations and officially address public library development. As the Prime Minister of Malaysia during this era, Abdul Rahman approved Anuar’s report but allowed the Ministry of Education and the National Library Committee to address the matter at their leisure.

In the colony of Jamaica, Sir William Alexander Bustamante addressed public library development, but in a way that stunted its growth. Having secured a pledge of £70,000 from the British Council to develop an island-wide public library system in

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October 1945, the Jamaican Parliament only completed its debate over its share of public library funding in August 1946. During the debate Bustamante—then serving as the Minister for Communications—called for a revision to Jamaica’s commitment to fund public library development,

But whilst I beg to second I must confess that I was one of those, or perhaps the only one who violently opposed the establishment of a library in this country, not because I have not knowledge of its usefulness but through the fact that I did not think that the finance of this country was enough to support such an expensive scheme…And whilst I will support the motion I feel impelled to move that the motion be accepted with the following amendment: That the amount to be paid by the Jamaica Government per annum shall not exceed £10,000. The message reads that the amount that shall be spent should not be less than £10,000…For any time one says that the amount to be spent should not be less than this, it may mean instead of spending £10,000 or £15,000 we may have to sacrifice Jamaica, sell it, become greater bankrupts, than we are, and even the amount we receive for sale of Jamaica may not be able to carry the scheme.431

Bustamante’s amendment won the day and became a provision within the Jamaica Library Act when it was passed by the Jamaican Parliament in 1949. Bustamante understood the usefulness of libraries but like Abdul Rahman considered it to be a secondary priority especially compared to pressing labor issues which were the foundation of his political success and the cornerstone platform of his political party.

Of the three nationalist leaders, Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe was the most proactive in terms of public library development. As Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Azikiwe enacted the Eastern Nigeria Public Library Ordinance in 1955 which created the Eastern Nigerian Public Library Board. Next he commissioned Kalu Okorie, the Chief Librarian of the Lagos Municipal Library, to perform a library survey of Eastern Nigeria. Once the survey was completed and the recommendations submitted to Azikiwe, the

Premier tasked Okorie to carry out his proposals. By the time Azikiwe rose to the position of Governor General of Nigeria in 1960, a UNESCO mobile public library service was operating and a regional central library was established in Eastern Nigeria.\footnote{C.C. Aguolu and I.E. Aguolu. “Library Development in Nigeria: Role of Dr. Azikiwe, The First President.” \textit{Herald of Library Science}, 36 no. 1-2 (January-April 1997): 8.}

Four years later and after much political wrangling with his Prime Minister, Sir Abu Bakar Tafewa, Azikiwe secured passage of the National Library Act of 1964 through the Nigerian Parliament and later that year opened the National Library of Nigeria to the public within temporary quarters. Library development was clearly more important to Azikiwe than it was to Bustamante and Abdul Rahman by virtue of his deeds pertaining to this issue. But the question of why this was the case must be addressed to better understand why librarianship in general and subscription librarianship in particular developed in the manner that they did within these post-World War II colonies.

\textbf{The Three Nationalist Leaders and Their Times}

Based purely upon their words, deeds and the platforms of their political parties all of these nationalist leaders possessed a deep appreciation and respect for the value of education as a positive transforming force in the social and cultural life of their colony. They did not all share that respect when it came to the role libraries played in colonial life.

Though Bustamante only received a secondary education, he was first and foremost a labor leader. On his political path to the prime ministership of Jamaica, Bustamante tackled bread and butter issues central to the interests of his constituents such as workers’ compensation, a living wage and safe-working environments. As outlined in the platform of the Jamaica Labour Party, education was an important issue but librarianship may have been viewed as a supplemental privilege while education may have been viewed as a fundamental right. During the Jamaican Parliamentary vote on funding for the island-wide library system, Bustamante saw the value of libraries but he did not view them independently of education, “And on further reflection I feel that a
library will be of a great educational value in this country and anything that will serve to improve our education will serve also to improve our civilization and our morals.”

This failure to see librarianship independently of education may also explain why he never bothered to convert the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica into a public library after Jamaican independence was achieved. For Bustamante, a library conversion of this nature may not only have alienated political supporters who were subscribers to the library and whose votes he would need in the Jamaican Parliament to push through his labor agenda. It also may have appeared as a non-issue to him compared to fulfilling the Jamaica Labour Party’s educational platform.

For Tunku Abdul Rahman as both a highly educated prince and a barrister, library development may not have been either a primary or secondary concern during his political career because the political and social challenges he confronted were critical to Malaysia’s survival as a colony and later as a nation. As stated earlier from 1948 to 1960 Abdul Rahman was forced to confront the Communist insurgency during the Malaysian Emergency, from 1957 to 1963 he fought for and united the states of Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei into the Federation of Malaysia; in 1965 he helped accelerate the legal secession of Singapore from the Malay federation when racial tensions between the Chinese and the Malay populations threatened to tear the federation apart and on 13 May 1969 he sought to quell a nationwide race riot that erupted in the aftermath of the 1969 general election.

With all of these events swirling around him, Abdul Rahman still had to confront cultural, social and economic issues that were central to the interests of his constituents such as housing, education and unemployment to name a few. He may have been too involved in these pressing political, social and economic issues to consider library development and delegated the matter to the Ministry of Education or the National Library Committee. This could also explain why the Penang Library retained its status as a subscription library in a sea of post-independence public library development. It was

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simply overlooked and set aside against a tide of political, social and economic issues which required Abdul Rahman’s full attention.

In the case of Azikiwe as a highly educated instructor and journalist library development was an issue to which he could devote his full attention because his area of responsibility was provincial and not national. As the Premier of Eastern Nigeria he could devote far more attention to this province’s social, economic and cultural problems than if he was running the entire nation. Azikiwe’s six years of premiership allowed him the time to develop a public library system that had the potential to reach all of his Eastern Nigerian constituents. When he became the Governor-General and later the President of Nigeria he suffered from internal political problems akin to those Abdul Rahman confronted.

Toyin Falola noted that Azikiwe and other Nigeria politicians during the late years of British rule and the early years of independence confronted party coalitions, inter-party conflicts and intra-party crises. These elements negatively impacted upon the ability of the Nigerian colonial and independent government to effectively confront economic, social, political, cultural and foreign policy issues. These coalitions, conflicts and crises also hindered national party development, created power-driven parasitic cabals, limited the electorate’s ability to practice a genuine democracy, endorsed rampant graft, corruption and nepotism, and exacerbated religious, ethnic and provincial rivalries.435

Weighed down by these pressing social, cultural and political concerns on a national level, Azikiwe may not have been able to give library development his full attention beyond the creation of the National Library of Nigeria in 1965. Also, the short duration of his presidency may have prevented him from accomplishing more library development because he was sworn into office on 1 October 1963 only to be deposed by a military coup on 15 January 1966. With regards to the continued existence of the Lagos Library as a subscription library, Azikiwe, like Bustamante, may not have wanted to anger supporters, bureaucrats and parliamentarians who not only could have been Lagos Library subscribers but whose votes and support would have been needed to carry out his political agenda. These very individuals may have viewed the Lagos Library as

their exclusive social preserve rather than an unwanted holdover from British colonial rule.

With internal and external social and political forces swirling around them, the Lagos Library, the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica and the Penang Library were either transformed or retrenched as they struggled to survive the independence periods of their respective host colonies. Yet all three of them continued to cater to an indigenous elite and a much diminished colonizer elite which still viewed these subscription libraries as cherished institutions which entertained, informed and sequestered them from the challenges of colonial and post-colonial life.
CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this study a series of questions were posed which now shall be addressed: What role did subscription libraries play in reflecting the way the metropolis imagined the colony and the colonizer imagined the colonized? What role did subscription libraries play in the lives of their respective users within these colonial settings? How were subscription libraries utilized as instruments of acculturation to convey notions of Britishness to the colonized and the colonizer? And why were subscription libraries able to persist in the aftermath of the rise of public librarianship during the post-independence periods of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria?

To answer the first question, it can be said that subscription libraries played no role in the way the metropolis imagined the colony until the colonies themselves were perceived to be in danger prior to and during World War II. With the advent of Nazi propaganda and the fall of Malaysia to the Japanese Empire, the British metropolitan government authorized the British Council to engage in new library development and utilize existing libraries and reading rooms for cultural propaganda activities throughout the British colonies. This is the main reason why the British Council attempted to consolidate the Lagos Library, the Tom Jones Library, the Henry Carr Library and the Lagos Municipal Library into a single national library for Nigeria. This is also the reason why the British Council established reading rooms throughout the urban centers of Nigeria. Both a national library and the reading rooms would have provided the British Council an orderly and controlled environment through which they could disseminate the values of British culture to all who entered these facilities. In the case of Jamaica, the aid the British Council provided to the Manchester Free Library and the financing of the Bateson Plan were designed to appease and counter disloyalty among the Jamaican masses and the European non-elite. Subscription libraries were instruments through which these challenges to British rule could be contested on a cultural level.

Only during the post-war period when the United States assumed the lead in confronting the Communist threat posed by the Soviet Union does one find a scaling back of British Council operations due to budgetary constraints and the Colonial Office’s Definition Document. Even then the British Council made a second attempt to establish a national library in Nigeria, enacted most of the tenets of the Bateson Plan in Jamaica
and established a cultural center in Penang as well as a library in Kuala Lumpur. The only difference between the post-war period and World War II was the fact that the British Council now confronted a growing American cultural presence and an indigenous nationalistic challenge within its colonies. From the mid-1950s to the early 1960s the nationalistic desires of the indigenous peoples led to independence and for most a place within the British Commonwealth.

With regards to how the colonizer imagined the colonized, subscription libraries were a socio-economic institution whose usage by the indigenous elite permitted the colonizer to view some of these British subjects as individuals worthy of a place of higher authority within the British Empire. Some of these colonized elite held influential civil service posts and succeeded in profitable professional occupations which allowed them to acquire enough disposable income to afford a membership at a subscription library. Because of this success, the British elite were compelled to view such individuals with a new perspective. It is true that a great deal of resentment towards the indigenous elite did exist in some quarters because they were trying to imitate British mannerisms, style and dress. Yet, through their loyalty to the British Empire, the income they possessed and their social standing within the colonial community, people like Henry Carr, R.N. Murray and Syed Alwi gained the respect of the British elite.

One example this respect can be found in the words of the British elite themselves as they recalled the character of members of the indigenous elite that they knew on a personal or professional level. Reflecting on the character of Henry Carr, Sir Rex Niven wrote, “A gentle man of great culture and vast knowledge of West African affairs, he was in charge of the strip of coast on either side of Lagos which formed the old Colony of Lagos. In his courtesy he treated the most junior of colleagues as he would the most senior. The Government eventually gave him a C.M.G. [Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George], it should have been a knighthood.”

Other members of the British elite though less verbose were no less praiseworthy of those indigenous elite with whom they worked. L.G. Thomas, Representative of the British Council Office in Kingston, Jamaica found the Chief Education Officer of Jamaica, R.N. Murray, to be a

very able and intelligent Jamaican of the best kind and a person that his successor to the Representative position should get to know.  While J.W. Gale found his Chief and General Clerk, Syed Alwi, at the British Council Institute in Kuala Lumpur to be young but capable, energetic and anxious at every turn to assume responsibility.

Another example of this respect can be found in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century history of British museums presented by Annie E. Coombs in her account of the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908,

> It is quite possible, therefore, that because of the British colonial administration’s relation with, and reliance on, this particular sector of African society, the exhibition organizers were reluctant to reproduce a ‘village’ susceptible to the category of ‘side-show’ to the same degree as the Senegalese village… Under these circumstances, and given the Nigerians effective and organized antagonisms to certain government initiatives, it must have seemed politically inadvisable to the organizing committee to include Nigerians amongst the ‘amusements’ at the Franco-British Exhibition.

Returning to the topic of colonial subscription libraries, they also played multiple roles in the lives of their patrons. Prior to World War II, the Penang Library served as a place for entertainment by which patrons could enjoy a sizable fiction collection. During the global conflict; the library acted as a refuge, served as a familiar setting to the indigenous elite and provided the indigenous masses with access to a realm of privilege to which they were unaccustomed. After the war the Penang Library acted as a British and Malaysian cultural center re-establishing the interrupted link between the British metropolis and the island while entertaining subscribers and non-subscribers alike.

The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica initially served as a source of academic and scientific information for its subscribers until World War I. With the end of that conflict, the library gradually shifted the focus of its collection from scholarly and scientific works to fiction and served as a source of entertainment for its users until the

437 BW 41/9 L.G. Thomas to Paul Sinker, 9 July 1957.
438 BW 104/12 J.W.L. Gale to R.K. Brady, 25 August 1952.
1950s. In 1954 the General Library transferred its entire fiction collection to the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library and became a repository for academic and scientific information as well as national and international government documents. By 1962 the General Library completed its transformation of returning back to its original function of serving as an academic and scientific information center to its subscribers.

The Lagos Library was consistently devoted to entertaining its subscribers. With a collection that was heavily weighted towards fiction, this library served to amuse its readers more so than inform them about life in the British Empire. While the roles these libraries played were evolving, circuitous, interrupted or even consistent at times, their routinely high subscription fees served as an income based dividing line between the British and indigenous elite and the European non-elite and the indigenous masses.

These libraries also instituted a character test which served as an additional dividing line between the British elite, those British subjects they deemed worthy of positions of higher authority and those they did not deem worthy. The membership vote doubled as an additional test to see if an applicant was not only worthy of being a member of the subscription library but also worthy of a position of higher authority. A member of the British and indigenous elite could afford the subscription fee, win the character vote and gain a membership within a subscription library. On the other hand, a European of non-elite status and a member of the indigenous masses could be denied membership on the same grounds.

Colonial subscription libraries contributed to this division through their race and ethnicity-based record keeping of their membership although this was not a uniform policy. The Penang Library did not start keeping racial and ethnic statistics on its membership until 1950. The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica never kept such statistics throughout its long history. And the Lagos Library not only recorded these statistics from the moment of its inception and but also continued this policy after independence. The reason for these record keeping variances may reside within the unique political and social environments of the colonies themselves.

In Malaysia, Dr. Cheah Cheng Poh may have started keeping racial and ethnic records of the library’s membership for collection development purposes. On the other hand, this racial and ethnic tracking may have been utilized to determine how many of
the loyal or disloyal groups to the British Empire comprise the Penang Library membership during the Malaysian Emergency. While no purges of the membership rolls were executed on these grounds during this political crisis, the data the Penang Library gathered did allow them that option if the political situation warranted it.

For The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica, no racial records may have been kept because of a racial and social assumption by the British elite that if one was a subscriber to the General Library one was white, affluent and a British citizen. Even with the creation of the Manchester Free Library in 1938 and the erection of the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library in 1954, the Denham-Keppel correspondences revealed that those who were not members of the General Library were simply the uncounted masses whose literacy needs were unimportant in the eyes of the Board of Governors. Once again, a social dividing line existed based upon income and character.

For the Lagos Library, its racial statistics of its membership was a continuation of an ongoing colonial custom. In every facet of public life from housing to school enrollment to taxation, racial and ethnic statistics in the city of Lagos were kept by the colonial and municipal governments. The Lagos Library statistics were kept for that reason as opposed to catering to the reading desires of its African members because its collection development policy excluded indigenous literature in favor of Western literature. After Nigerian independence, the continued record keeping of such statistics served no useful purpose since the library’s collection development policies remained unchanged from the colonial period. This record keeping also allowed libraries to be more efficiently utilized as instruments of British acculturation.

Subscription libraries served as instruments of British acculturation in accordance with their role within a given colony. Because the Penang Library and the Lagos Library were geared towards entertaining their subscribers, most of the fiction and non-fiction works within their collections conveyed notions of Britishness and aspects of British culture. Works by William Shakespeare, George Orwell, Charles Dickens, Evelyn Waugh, Margery Sharp, and Agatha Christie may have reminded British subscribers of their connection to the metropolis while for the indigenous subscribers it may have provided them a greater level of insight into the cultural nature of the British people.
The newspaper collection in these libraries was another vital key to conveying notions of Britishness to subscribers. Newspapers and periodicals such as *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle, The Colonial Review, The Daily Gleaner, United Empire, The Nigerian Daily Times* and *The Times* allowed the British elite to follow local, regional, imperial and world events which may have reduced any feelings of isolation they may have had during their stay in the colonies. For the indigenous elite, these newspapers acted much like the books they read in these libraries—they gave their readers a view of the wider world beyond their own shores and provided a pro-British perspective outside of current events. But why were subscription libraries able to persist in the aftermath of the rise of public librarianship during the post independence periods of Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria?

These subscription libraries were able to survive because they were either completely abandoned or protected by the colonial and independent governments. The Penang Library was largely abandoned by its local and federal government except for the annual federal grant it received and the retention of control by the Malaysian education department and the library management committee. This abandonment permitted the committee enough freedom to raise or lower its subscription fees in accordance with its financial condition. The annual federal grant provided the Penang Library a consistent source of income upon which it could rely for a firm budgetary foundation. Both sources presented the library management committee with the means to survive economic and social changes which could hurt public libraries because of their complete dependence on government funding. The abandonment of the Penang Library by the colonial and independent governments was not unique and can be found in the colonized and independent governments’ treatment of the hill stations of India. As Dane Kennedy surmised, “Independence did, to be sure, bring substantial changes to the hill stations. The British left…The Indians took over, and they have since made these highland resorts conform to their needs and desires…Indians go to the highlands for many of the same reasons the British did.”440 This abandonment by the colonial and independent

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governments of India permitted the Indian elite to convert these former sanctums of the British Raj into public places for all who could afford to visit them.

The Lagos Library always enjoyed the protection of the colonial and national governments though direct financial aid was lacking at times. Its clientele of civil servants and professionals ensured the longevity of the library through their power in the government and their material and financial contributions to the institution. The survival of the Lagos Library in post-independence Nigeria also mirrors the survival of the clubs in post-independence India. As Mrinalini Sinha argued “The club survives in independent India, however, not merely as sentimental nostalgia for the British Raj. Its survival owes as much to the selective re-appropriation by Indians of the ever-present tension in colonial clubbability: the potential clubbability of the Indians themselves.”

The General Library of the Institute of Jamaica largely enjoyed the protection of the colonial government because it was mandated by law. Even after the General Library purged itself of its fiction collection in 1954, the institution still enjoyed enough financial support from its subscribers and the national government to survive as a subscription library well after independence. As much as these libraries were cherished institutions which enjoyed the near unconditional support of their subscribers, they also served a practical purpose as a new version of Macaulayism.

This new Macaulayism is an informal extension of the original. Its primary focus is not on language but on literacy and reading as the fundamental components to maintaining the intellectual integrity of a colonial bureaucracy. Reading is a skill and much like any skill it has to be practiced, developed and honed to have any lasting value for its user. Prior to taking the colonial civil service examinations, the reading habits of Malaysian, Jamaican and Nigerian applicants were geared towards perusing, studying and understanding just enough information to pass the exam. As T.T. Solaru, manager of the Nigerian branch of the Oxford University Press, noted in *The Times Literary Supplement*, “The reading habits of most people, apart from textbooks for passing examinations, were severely limited...The reading habit had not been inculcated at school. One textbook a subject was the optimum reading list. Even at that time the few supplementary reading

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materials published to support the textbooks were not bought, or used in sufficient numbers.”

The reading of fiction was deemed superfluous compared to the reading of textbooks which could help an applicant acquire employment.

These reading habits encouraged what William A. Gray in his work The Teaching of Reading and Writing: An International Survey called functional literacy, “A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group.” These civil servant applicants achieved a level of functional literacy which allowed them to successfully pass the civil service examination and acquire a position in the colonial bureaucracy. Once they acquired their civil service position, their level of functional literacy and narrow reading habits locked them into a crucible of reading predominantly English-language agricultural, commercial and technical texts. But there were other factors which contributed to the creation of this crucible.

During the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, private libraries were expensive to acquire and maintain, shipping costs for books were consistently high and local bookshops sometimes charged exorbitant prices for their wares. Newspapers did provide opportunities for subscribers and non-subscribers alike to develop the habit of reading. Aside from the larger newspapers, their service was more often than not shortened by uncertain economic conditions in the metropolis or the colony. As a British resident of Penang, J.H.M. Robson noted, “Newspapers are not gold mines for proprietors. People at home wonder how it is possible to provide 16 or 20 page daily papers in a small place like Malaya where so few people can read English.” And newspapers rarely offered any content designed to intellectually stimulate the mind of its readers beyond informing them of current events.

Other than colonial subscription libraries, these conditions left the average Nigerian, Malaysian and Jamaican civil servant with three recourses for reading: religious texts from Christian missionaries and indigenous sources which were always ample and

444 The Indian Pioneer (Kuala Lumpur), 28 February 1930.
sometimes free; reading rooms which were free yet disorganized and contained cultural propaganda plus discarded reading materials from the private libraries of the British elite; and job-related literature which was limited in content. These limited options created a fertile ground for illiteracy because of a crucial drawback to functional literacy: It was the bare minimum of what was required for effective reading.

Without any attempt by the reader to improve his or her reading skills, a very real possibility existed that a civil servant could slip back into illiteracy. And with such a high level of dependency upon these individuals to operate their bureaucracies, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these colonial governments knew they could not function for long if most of their staff were illiterate. This is the reason why in 1880 the Straits Settlements Government gave the Penang Library an annual grant in exchange for a free reading room. It is also the reason why in 1900 the General Library of the Institute of Jamaica established a book box scheme for the major urban centers outside of Kingston. And this is the reason why in 1932 the Lagos Library launched their sub-library program throughout the towns and cities of Nigeria. There was a desire and need to improve the reading habits of the indigenous elite within and beyond the colonial and regional capitals of Georgetown, Lagos and Kingston.

Prior to CDA 1929, the colonial governments possessed limited options to confront this problem. Most colonial governors dared not establish formal social welfare programs because they were concerned over how they would be perceived by the Colonial Office. “In the nineteenth century a colony which needed a grant-in-aid could have been regarded as a very dubious asset, and in the early twentieth century it would probably have been examined for signs of inefficient administration.” With laissez-faire colonial development operating as the rule of the day, the colonial governments had to rely on subscription libraries to provide adult education opportunities for their indigenous civil servants to develop their reading skills.

And this is where the new version of Macaulayism comes into play. The original Macaulayism advocated that English was the lingua franca of the British Empire and that it should be taught in all colonial schools to indigenous students. The new version of

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Macaulayism considered this principle to be a given assumption and sought to maintain and develop mastery over the English language through the adoption of sound reading habits. Macaulayism believed that while it was prohibitively expensive to educate all of the indigenous masses, an indigenous elite should be created to serve as interpreters between the British elite and the indigenous masses. The new version of Macaulayism agreed with this principle but also advocated that the colonized elite should be allowed to earn cultural rewards—membership to private clubs, subscription libraries and social events—to ensure their cooperation and loyalty to the Crown. Macaulayism advocated this trained indigenous elite should be culturally and intellectually enfranchised to be British in thought and in action. The new version of Macaulayism built upon this principle by strongly endorsing the functionality of any cultural enfranchisement. To be of any real value, cultural rewards had to contribute to the maintenance of the colonial government bureaucracy, they had to serve as a viable substitute for political enfranchisement and they had to contribute to the intellectual development of the indigenous elite. Books, reading and subscription library membership were the keys to the new version of Macaulayism which started in the late nineteenth century and carried itself into the post-independence period of the twentieth century.

This new version of Macaulayism enjoyed a modicum of success because no colonial government bureaucracy ever collapsed due to a lack of qualified employees. Wars, natural disasters and work stoppages were the usual culprits for a slow down or collapse within such a bureaucracy. But this success was limited at best because the literacy campaigns of post-independence Jamaica, Malaysia and Nigeria revealed that even among the indigenous urban elite subscription libraries were insufficient to fully entertain them, to fully inform them about current events and to fully enlighten their minds to broader possibilities.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sterling Joseph Coleman, Jr., son of Sterling Joseph Coleman, Sr. and Rosie Coleman was born on 21 August 1969, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He graduated from De La Salle High School in 1983. Sterling received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in Political Science from Louisiana State University in May 1991. He received his Master of Arts degree at the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies from the University of Michigan in May 1993. Sterling also received a Teaching Certificate in Secondary Education from Southern University at New Orleans in May 1995. From August 1995 to May 1996 he served as a Social Studies Instructor at John Marshall High School in Richmond, Virginia. Sterling received his Master of Library and Information Science degree from Louisiana State University in August 1999. From September 1999 to December 2003 he served as the Digital Resources Librarian at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. In January 2004, Sterling entered Florida State University to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree in History. He has written numerous articles and in February 2008 published the book Librarianship and Information Science in the Islamic World 1966-1999: An Annotated Bibliography.