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KENYA

JANUARY 1921

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Jan 30 '21

Mr.

Dr.

Mr. J. A. M. S.

Sir H. L. G.

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R. G.

Subsequent Paper

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390249

BRITISH POLICY

Brought up with Mr Russell at Adia Ap.

Put by
Mr. Bostock + Mr. Harley. M.R.

To be answered

S. 1. 12. 21

An excellent speech

G. G. 3. 5. 21

at one

Mr. Stansby

To me 607 we are here now,
 I think, see the later paper.

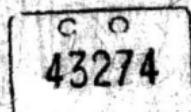
1921. 19. 12. 21

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Subsequent Paper

P. 3816

In any
he
No.
and addressed
not to any Government
to
The Under-Secretary of State
Foreign Office
London, S.W.1.



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THE Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his
compliments to the Under Secretary of State for
the Colonies and by direction of the Secretary of State,
transmits herewith copy Y of the under-mentioned paper.

Mr. A. Marshall
Under-Secretary
No. 81

June 1
Yours very
P. Russell

London, 1901
At present

Similar letter sent to

... to take the
time to address Your Lordship.

I went directly from
England by land to the ad-
ministrative command my new duty
and instructions since
arrived, counted, and right
now present of 1900
exceeded the whole duty of
1800. I concluded the
existing of the existing Ethiopia
was of ensuring the integrity
of British influence of
Abyssinia and Italy. For the
British interests lie simply
in a prosperous country.

It is on our frontiers
we divide. I have assumed
are strongly averse to
responsibilities, or to

The R. H. M.

for the purpose of mediation. E. C.

for consideration or give food for thought. In short, I have gone on the principle that your wisdom would be best pleased to be as little concerned as possible with the affairs of Abyssinia.

There is a question that I may conveniently refer to here because it has in the past been included among our objectives. I allude to the elimination of French influence. The traditional hostility to England which imbues French colonial policy was manifest in Abyssinia as elsewhere. France was the source of much of the arms traffic. It was felt that with Italy, whose interests resembled our own, we might work for the betterment of the country. If it broke up, the problem would be simplified if the settlement could be among two interested parties instead of three. French influence in Abyssinia rests solely on the possession of Djibouti. If that port goes, the Franco-Ethiopian railway and all else follow. Suggestions have been made in the past that France might abandon her possession in exchange for an English colony. If such a project was ever considered, I presume it may now be regarded as in abeyance until more important matters are settled. A liquidation of French interests here is desirable, but, for sufficient reasons, it does not seem as urgent to me as it did to my predecessors. The waning revenue of Djibouti and the insolvency of the railway may in the future lead to some spontaneous step by France in the desired direction, but there is no good ground for anticipating it. For the time being, our activity wider than here should be limited to improving communications between British Somaliland and Abyssinia. This should draw trade to her ports and Seila to the detriment of the

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British policy and interests

In view of the nature of your question, the British
Government's own considerations will naturally
have to be the policy & object of intervention.
The British Government by the arrangement mentioned in the
Suez Canal Agreement is bound to advise the Emperor
of the permanent regime. The difference of opinion may
exist among the members of the Cabinet as to the policy of the
Government, but they would throughout be agreed in the
object, i.e. to return to the Emperor such a
government and such an order of the day, as would be
satisfactory to one or two of the principal provinces
and which would be able to support him in his
position. It is natural that the British Government
should be anxious to give effect to its policy,
but it must be remembered that the great alternative would create
a situation which would be difficult for His Majesty's Government.
In an empire in which British interests are most
involved, such as Show, Shewa and Marar, there is no
reason why their separation should be injurious to them.
A province which is strong enough to defy the central power
could, in England, be able to maintain internal order.
Such a development might even be in our interest. I can
imagine a situation in which loyalty to our engagement
to "make every effort to preserve the integrity of
Ethiopia" might be strained. An efficient and friendly
governor of a frontier province would merit our support
against a weak emperor who ordered his recall. The line
of action in such a case must be guided by circumstances,

and it will be up to consider it when the situation arises.

We come now to the question of British policy in the event of a complete break-up of the Empire when the Government of the Free People of Africa the integrity shall have failed. Article 17 of the covenant of 1907 demands the application of such a code as can be agreed upon by the parts of the Commonwealth governments in order to safeguard the interests of the people. These interests are now, as I write in 1914, mainly those of India and the dominions of Australia, Canada, & New Zealand. I shall not, however, go into the details of the law. I am not a lawyer. My knowledge of law is very limited. Many are too objectionable to me. I will give my conclusions, if I can, in the following pages. There would be no time for me to do so if I had to go into the details of my engagements.

I have a copy of a letter from Mr. Kitchener to the War Office dated 1st April 1914. It may have been addressed in the name of the War Office. It is, in my opinion, of great interest. It is described as "Mr. Kitchener's copy of no part of the original". It is dated 1st April 1914. It is not accompanied by any signature or writing. I am unaware whether, at the time when these persons laid down had official approval. I cannot say, however, that in present circumstances, they could do less than His Majesty's Government would wish to accept. For this reason it is suggested, however, that some review of an altered state of things may not be out of place. In my mind England's

territorial needs in Abyssinia lie in a nutshell. They are the Dergo and the Blue Nile.

The Government of Kenya wish to include a portion of northern Abyssinia in the Protectorate. The frontier in question is, I believe, bounded on the East by the River Tekezze which, on the north by a line running diagonally between the ninth and eight parallels, and to the west by the existing frontier of the Sudan. In acquiring this territory the Government of Kenya would obtain a rich living and an up-to-date frontier. They would also possess a bonanza of game. The herds of elephants which at various times have taken up residence in this part of Africa, and the natives are now following this fast increasing waste in ever increasing numbers. At the time the Abyssinian Government were reduced to impotency, I believe that the annexation of the territory in question would be a simple operation. It would clash with the designs of no other Power.

In regards the Blue. i.e., I think that the Egyptian and Sudan Governments would insist that the control of the river and its headwaters in Lake Tana must pass to a power in whose hands their interests are safe. I do not know whether the before-mentioned Governments would cede the possession of the entire lake and of both banks of the river. I presume they would and I presume too that Italy would declare this to be prejudicial to her interests referred to in Article IV (b) of the Tripartite Agreement. I cannot say what is the position as defined by the Treaty.

I am unable to reconcile the Anglo-Italian Protocols of March 24th and April 15th 1899, & I am unaware what are the "subsequent agreements modifying them" or the "reserves formulated by the French Government", or whether these latter have any bearing on the question. If ever it is our lot, I suggest that His Majesty's Government as long as we hold retained an interest in Egypt or the Sudan, we can not abandon the Blue Nile. In the event of a partition of all Abyssinia, our requirements being so moderate, it should be possible to compensate Italian claims by concessions in other directions.

For the rest, I imagine His Majesty's Government have no wish to add to British Somaliland, or (saving some faint negotiations) to extend the frontier of the British-Egyptian Sudan. The remainder of the country could then be left, without detriment to our interests, to satisfy the ambitions of France and Italy, or to work out its own evolution as a number of independent states. If we have a clear conception of what we want, the rest can be left for settlement when the time comes.

Your Lordship will not conclude because I have raised these problems that, in my opinion, the need for a considered policy is pressing. My brief acquaintanceship with this country does not lead me to expect its early break up. The monarchy is weaker than it was under the iron rule of Menelik, but there is no apparent tendency to disruption. The battle of Adowa gave Abyssinia a new lease of independence. The events of the last years have further prolonged it. In 1912 my

predecessor

history teaches that we may always do
what we would subject our slaves to, if we
had the power; and the English did
this when they enacted the Slave
Trade Act of the second. Now suppose
the members of the Association were compelled
to conform to the commands of the Slaveholders,
and the Association must stand. But that would
be like the slaves themselves. Then
the slaves and their masters would not exist
to us, as the past inhabitants.
The English nation has always
been a violent people. This is a consequence of
the fact that it has always been a
nation of conquerors. The English nation
has always had an enemy to conquer, and it has
done so every year. I will not say all of the
time, but I will say that it has
done so every year. I will state that no civilization
exists in England since 1600 A.D. which does
not show signs of regeneration among its inhabitants. I
do not say this entirely, because the English have seen
that they must be continually on the move. They have
stage of development as the latter. I do not believe
that the Monarchy, the Church, the army, and
perhaps the systems of justice and local government would
show points of resemblance to one who had time to
make a comparative study of them. Slavery and frankpledge
are institutions among the Abyssinians. They drink mead
out of horns, and carpet the floor with rushes.

If my memory serves me, Carlyle somewhere describes

The Anglo-Saxons are "trouthing about in pot-bellied
equanimity," not dressing up heroic toil or sacrifice. . . .
This also partly characterizes the Abyssinians. I could
not induce Mr. Price resemblance that a like docility
is peculiar to Abyssinia as ~~and~~ England. Anglo-Saxon
England had the traditions, however faint, of centuries
of rule by a civilized Power. In the darkest age a
sense of looking was handed on, and there were little
with the outside world to which there is nothing comparable
in modern Abyssinia. None the less, the Abyssinians
stand out among the native races of Africa.
Perhaps, under some such stamping of foreign civilization
as the English were subjected to, they may emerge, in
centuries to come, among the greatest and progressive
nations of a new age.

No. 118.

(A 6081/3726/1).

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

AUGUST 24TH, 1921.

SIR:-

I received your despatch No. 31 of the 1st June last in which you express British policy in Abyssinia and have to thank you for your interesting review of the existing position.

2. You are very clear in your view that the interests of His Majesty's Government lie in the maintenance of Abyssinia as an independent country.

3. I would like to know what part of your despatch you speak of as the "Protocol". The text of which is not necessarily in the despatch. If you will state which of the treatises signed in the present agreement are not available at our Foreign Office, copies will be forwarded.

I am, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Yours very truly,

(Signature - Name)

S. L. M. -

Chancell., Secy.,
etc., etc., etc.