

British Council's Cultural Dynamism in Former French and British Colonies : A Comparative Study

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ملخص:

إن خصوصيات مساهمة المركز الثقافي البريطاني في دعم الاعتبارات السياسية و الاقتصادية البريطانية في فترة ما بعد استقلال المستعمرات تظهر جليا من خلال نشاطه الكثيف في دول الكومنولث مثل الهند وكينيا، خلافا لنشاطه المحدود في دول أخرى مثل الجزائر و المغرب أين المصالح البريطانية محدودة بالمقارنة مع مصالحها في دول الكومنولث. فالمقارنة بين نشاط المركز الثقافي البريطاني في المستعمرات البريطانية السابقة ونشاطه في المستعمرات الفرنسية السابقة تؤكد إن الروابط التاريخية بين الاستعمار ومستعمراته لم تغيب أبدا حتى في العلاقات الثقافية التي زعمت بريطانيا بأنها مستقلة عن الحكومة وبعيدة كل البعد عن الحسابات السياسية.

Introduction

Throughout history, various political, economic and cultural relations have been established between different countries of the world. Out of such relations could result interests, exchange of goods, ideas, values, ideologies as well as friendships, misunderstanding and conflicts. For instance, Britain and America shared the same culture but went into war against each other. A

need for a strong factor which would provide a favorable climate for understanding between world nations was then manifested. Thus, cultural institutions were established to promote cultural relations between world's powers and other countries. In this context, the Goethe Institute promoted Germany's cultural activities abroad, the Dante Alighieri Italian language and culture; the Service des Oeuvres Françaises and the French Missionary Schools implemented France's powerful cultural relations programme and the British Council was in charge of Britain's cultural work abroad. This British agency was set up in 1934 and was officially claimed to be "a non-governmental body". Such declared neutrality, with regard to any political long- or short-term policies, was tested on several occasions, particularly during the 1980s.

The purpose of the present paper is to consider the link between the British Council's dynamism and Britain's political considerations, as regard the 1980s, through a specific analysis and comparison between the Council's policy in two former French colonies : Morocco and Algeria and its policy in two Commonwealth countries : Kenya and India, former British colonies where Britain has always had important interests to protect and significant influence to preserve.

I- The British Council's Policy in Two Former French Colonies : Morocco and Algeria

Since the beginning of the colonial era, Britain had seen North Africa as a backyard of France and had stayed clear from anything that could possibly be seen by the French as a hostile British move in the region.¹ Events, however, proved both the French and the British wrong in so far as the countries of North Africa sustained their independences and started looking for partners all over the world - not just in Europe, but also beyond their traditional partners. This policy of diversification encouraged relations between Britain and North African countries. The presence of the British Council in former French Colonies in the first stage could not understandably compete in scope with French efforts in the cultural field and this can certainly be ascribed to the fact - as more substantial subsequent analysis will show - that the British Council acted as an instrument of foreign policy as far as Britain was concerned and therefore lacked a full - fledged policy in this initial period. This is why teaching the English Language was the first priority before developing other areas of co-operation. In fact, the British Council did not promote English in Morocco and Algeria only for the sake of spreading this language. The world at large may appreciate the international importance of English without the British Council or the British Government efforts. Everywhere an eagerness to learn this language grew. The Council wanted to promote closer ties between Britain and these two former French colonies - namely Morocco and Algeria - because they offered a new interest.

After these countries independences, Britain succeeded in cultivating greater commercial partnership with them than it used to have during the colonial period. Thatcher's era showed still more motivation than was demonstrated in earlier years, when disequilibrium characterized these countries imports and exports, Britain's export to them being superior to its imports. The reason for the change was that for beginners like Morocco and Algeria, the economic liberalism witnessed at the beginning of the 1980s provided the opportunity for more mutually developed relations with Britain because France was no longer monopolizing trade with the countries concerned. The change also happened at a time when Europe was going through a great mutation, when no one knew whether it was going to be a stronger Europe for its partners and itself or a fortress which closed upon itself and from which it excluded all the traditional non-European partners. Britain has always been in favour of a free and open market, of open politics.

Yet, its political relations with these former French colonies in particular could not be said to have been very close as far as foreign relations were concerned: and though culture has traditionally proved to have gone hand in hand with politics, the British Council's work in these countries remained limited in comparison to its activities in countries where it was expected to be intense like the Commonwealth countries. Taking into account the differences in population between certain countries, in 1984, for

instance, the British Council in Morocco sent only 26 Moroccans to Britain whereas it sent 932 Kenyans, 1501 Indians and only 371 Chinese.² Besides, while its expenditure for 1988/89 - for example - was £19.747 million in India, £10.225 million in Kenya, in Algeria it was £1.779 million and Morocco's share was only £1.03 million while new offices were being established in Eastern Europe.³ These figures revealed the Council's unstated policy which made a difference between various countries just not according to their respective population but rather according to the importance either political or economic - sometimes both - these countries could play on the world scene in general and could represent for Britain in particular as has already been suggested through my analysis.

To strengthen a real development in relations between countries, state visits are traditionally organized. And indeed, State visits between Britain and these two countries from the Maghreb, Morocco and Algeria, took place during the Thatcher's era in particular. For instance, in 1979, Queen Elizabeth II paid a visit to Algeria and Morocco. In 1980, for the first time, an Algerian foreign Minister paid an official visit to London and in 1987, King Hassan II visited Britain. Consequently, a brief boost was given to the political relations between Britain and these countries.

Despite Morocco's and Algeria's governments' encouragement since independence for the British Council to open offices and start programmes, Anglo-Moroccan and Anglo-Algerian cultural co-operation

was not what the Moroccans or Algerians wanted it to be, i.e., wide and intense.⁴ One may safely suppose that the Council's distribution of its budget overseas was subject to political considerations; otherwise the British Council could easily have restricted its very intense activities in India or Kenya, for instance, instead of giving up some schemes- as will be illustrated in the case of Morocco, where there was a high demand for British culture. Moreover, the fact that the British Council neglected to issue regular detailed reports concerning British Council policy towards former French colonies in comparison to its detailed documentation of this policy towards the rest of the world and particularly the Commonwealth countries is a measure in itself of the limitation of British cultural co-operation or interests in these North African countries.

I.A-The British Council's Policy in Morocco

Before the 1980s, the British Council's dealing with Morocco consisted in teaching the English Language and helping Moroccans to develop their own teaching programmes. During the 1980s, it continued to be committed to this task though not in a very active way as will appear later on. Moreover, it concentrated on Moroccan needs for British higher education and research. Accordingly, it was concerned with sending Moroccans to Britain without neglecting the teaching of the English language locally.⁵ Indeed, the British Council provided specialists and advisers for English language teaching and co-operation with the Centre for

British Teachers which in 1984/85 had more than 100 secondary school teachers in Morocco. But, in addition to its highly trained English teachers and inspectors, the Council hosted civil servants and businessmen, the latter being decision-makers or future decision-makers.

Beside its efforts in the teaching field, the British Council worked closely with the Ministries of Co-operation and Education to make sure that what was to be presented with the limited resources devoted to this former French colony matched exactly the two countries' priorities (educational and developmental for Morocco, commercial and political in case of need for Britain). It also wanted to make sure that Moroccans were informed about Britain's possible contributions to World Bank and European Community vocational and educational projects and about British capacity to influence and direct concentration-of international agencies to which Britain belonged-on priority areas defined by Moroccan Government.⁶ Such a co-operation resulted in a focus on agriculture and engineering, applied sciences, vocational training, and work on the manufacture of drinking water.⁷ Indeed, formal links were established in agriculture with Reading University and in librarianship with Sheffield. Other links flourished at other universities in computer and applied sciences, in geology and English.⁸

Short, high-level research visits to Britain were encouraged by the Moroccan Ministry of Education which devoted more resources to such operations. For instance, in 1985, most of these visits were in the field

of English language teaching, but in 1986, they covered applied sciences and agriculture. In fact, the visit of the British Minister of agriculture to Morocco in 1985/86 was to emphasize the Anglo-Moroccan active exchange programme in agriculture. Consequently, a new link with the Centre of Arid Zone Studies, University College of North Wales was registered.

During the 1980s and for the first time, the Council supported marketing missions by British universities in Morocco. In addition, its library took part in five book exhibitions in higher education centers and backed a rapidly growing trade in British books in 1984/85.⁹ The following year witnessed the setting up of the first joint training scheme for secondary school inspectors of English. Trainees spent the first year of a two-year programme in Britain and then returned to Morocco for a year of practical experience.

According to a Moroccan diplomat consulted on the 18th of August 1995 in London and who preferred not to have his name mentioned, the number of Moroccan students sent by the British Council to Britain never exceeded one hundred during the 1980s because of the astronomical figures the British universities charged.¹⁰ This phenomenon coincided with the overseas fee increase in the 1980s, which compelled Moroccans, like the citizens of many other developing nations to start looking for other countries like Germany and the United States whose help also

covered fees, not just support grants. Indeed, in 1980, the British Council sent only 27 Moroccans¹¹ and in 1981, this number reached no more than 35.¹²

However, parallel to this, the Moroccan government started looking into different possibilities with the British Council and succeeded in obtaining a few full thesis- sponsorship by the British Council on a three to four-years basis (mainly in applied sciences and agriculture), but this scheme reduced the number of Moroccan students, sponsored by the Council quite considerably during the second half of the 1980s.¹³ Accordingly, Morocco discussed the possibilities with the British Council of reducing the sponsorships to two years : i.e., covering students' required "MA" courses, with the students having to go back to Morocco and start teaching with an MA, in the meantime start enrolling for a Ph.D.Thesis which would be jointly supervised by a supervisor in the UK and another in Morocco with visits sponsored by the British Council intermittently until the time that the thesis was ready for the viva. This policy, in fact, helped Moroccans avoid paying enrollment fees for Ph.D. theses. In addition, unspecified projects were initiated from Morocco during that period; however, following its government's new policy towards Eastern Europe the British Council had to give up their fulfillment.

This co-operation was however limited as a result of the limited dynamism of the Council in comparison to its work in Commonwealth countries. Such an attitude in regard to this former French colony

on the part of the British Council seems to be likely attributed only to requirements set by the British Foreign Office - it was not experienced by, for instance, India or Kenya as these two countries had close political, economic and cultural ties with Britain. Yet, Morocco offered a potential, being the second most populous Arab-country. It is geographically and politically close to Europe and has mineral and agricultural resources and capacities. During the 1980s, the Council did not feel the need to extend its activities, already specified - bringing Moroccans to Britain, sending British people to Morocco ; English language teaching, opening a library - not did it multiply efforts to satisfy the Moroccans' opening up toward British culture and scholarship and this despite the willingness shown by Moroccan people to pay high sums of money for British Council services.¹⁴

Such British Council services in Morocco were especially meaningful at a period when the latter was in need of diversifying its internal transactions, particularly to sustain its increased economic liberalism during the

1980s. As shown above, the Council had close links with Moroccan Ministries of Co-operation and Education. The latter might suggest that the British were wishing to influence the Moroccan perception of British help direct concentration on priority areas defined by the Moroccan Government. In other words, the British Council seemed to want first and foremost to present Britain as a country which could actually serve Moroccan interests at the international level-

within the E.E.C and the World Bank, for example. Yet in actual terms, the very Moroccan expectations were not always fulfilled during the 1980's. Witness the giving up of the British Council Projects that it initiated during the second half of the 1980s as Britain's interests as a whole shifted to the European Eastern countries.

Thus, instead of investing in the long-term as the French did in Egypt for example, the British Council just prepared the ground and helped indirectly other Anglophone powers: the USA in particular, to undertake cultural activities with Morocco on a larger scale and gather the maximum of benefits-political as well as economic-that could result from an extended cultural work. Moreover, the British Council's lack of enthusiasm helped Moroccans to divert their attention to other European countries' cultural agencies such as the Goethe Institute. These cultural bodies, whose governments did not want to be left aside in view of French cultural presence, developed a long-term policy for cultural relations and thus, devoted more money-than the British did-to answer the maximum of demands from overseas for their respective cultures.

I.B- The British Council's Policy in Algeria

UK-Algerian relations have never been better than they were during the 1980s. After the British Queen's visit in 1979 to Algeria, a continuing series of bilateral ministerial visits occurred. Indeed, it was only in 1980 that the first time an Algerian Foreign Minister

paid an official visit to London. The British tried to establish better contacts with Algerian Government Officials most responsible for the country's development policies.¹⁵ Such a British initiative was backed by the British Council whose cultural activities promoted friendships with the Algerians.

Before the 1960s, Anglo-Algerian relations were characterized by animosity. The latter was mainly caused by British ambivalent attitude towards the "Rhodesian" problem in 1965.¹⁶ and Britain's participation in the Zionist military attack against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967.¹⁷ Indeed, as a Non-aligned and Arab country, Algeria was tremendously injured and affected by this British co-operation with colonial expansionist policies. Consequently, it broke its diplomatic relations with Britain in 1967, hosted and trained Zimbabwean freedom fighters on its territory and gave open support to the Palestinian cause. However, the British Council carried on its cultural work, cultivating friendships among the Algerian intellectuals and civil servants who constituted its audience. Thus, the Council paved the way for a new start between Britain and Algeria which offered opportunities for business after the liberal atmosphere that characterized Algerian Foreign Policy at the beginning of the 1980s. As was pointed out by the British Council Board: "There was increasing evidence that Algeria would like to collaborate more with Britain...".¹⁸ Thus, as political relations between Britain and Algeria improved, the Council's activities knew a relatively remarkable dynamism.

While the Council's emphasis in Algeria before the 1980s consisted in training and helping Algerian people to develop their institutions by placing through co-operation British experience at their disposal, during the 1980s, the Council's efforts started to flourish in a more significant way. This, in fact, was manifested in a dramatical increase in the number of Algerian people actually sent to Britain by the British Council. Indeed, the number increased from 14 in 1981 to 200 in 1985.¹⁹ For instance, this activity remained the most important task of the British Council in Algeria like elsewhere. Accordingly, the Council sponsored several inter-university links. The latter resulted in the flow of academics in both directions.²⁰ Personal exchanges also occurred in other fields such as archeology, earthquake engineering, computer technology, nuclear and solar energy, public administration and building research.²¹ The expected result of many of these visits was not only scientific and technological improvement but also the furthering of commercial potential. Algerian-financed special courses and study tours in Britain were recorded. In addition, the Council sent hundreds of Algerian official visitors to Britain, among them 38 engineers from the National Steel Works in Annaba - the largest industrial complex in North Africa.²² This, in fact, was expected to lead to twinning arrangement with British steel.²³

In 1989, 250 Algerians were sent for both long and short-term visits, ranging from computer scientists preparing Ph.Ds to musicians on two week summer

courses. The number of Algerian people actually sent to Britain increased dramatically during the 1980s to exceed hundreds whereas the number of Moroccans during the same period - as indicated earlier - never reached one hundred as testified by the Moroccan diplomat interviewed in 1995. This differentiation between these two French-speaking countries was dictated by both Algeria's commitment to British postgraduate training and its determination to make English the language of teaching and research in science and technology²⁴, a fact that facilitated contacts between Britain and Algeria. It also spread British political and economic influences in this strategic area of the Mediterranean known for its significantly remarkable attitudes in international conflicts, particularly those related to the Arab Nation and to Africa with which Britain has always had vested interests. Hence a more varied picture than with Morocco and the making of relatively more detailed and meaningful information available.

Thus, the Council's objective at that time became much more targeted towards the higher educational sector on which the Algerian government was investing heavily - an investment estimated, for instance, at £50 million over 1986/87, 1987/88, 1988/89.²⁵ So, in response to Algeria's needs, the British Council changed the way in which it was trying to achieve its objective by supporting the development of highly trained personnel in the university sector. As Timothy Eggar, Under Secretary of State at the Foreign

and Commonwealth Office from 1985 to 1989, pointed out in 1989:

In fact, Algeria's tendency to loosen its ties with France coincided with Britain's hope to increase its share in the overseas student market for the political and commercial advantages Algeria actually has always offered. To preserve these links with Algeria, the British Council had to work actively to spread the English language and establish better contacts - than in 1962-1979 - between the two peoples: during the first half of the 1980s, it multiplied its efforts to provide English courses for Algerians in particular for those requiring English for professional reasons.²⁷ Obviously, the technical fields were favoured over literary and purely cultural specialties for the significant and considerable revenues they could bring about. Accordingly, a significant increase in the number of Algerian students actually studying at the local British Council's teaching centre was witnessed as the following table shows :

Year	Number of students
1982-83	2428
1983-84	2537
1984-85	2700
1985-86	2727
1986-87	2782

Table One.²⁸

The focusing during the 1980s was much more on training post graduate students-from the educational, scientific and technological fields-going to Britain in terms of the English that they needed when they would get there. Furthermore, the Council's operations in Algeria involved what is called Book Promotion work, that is to say, promoting British books in Algeria to give people access to British thinking and views. It facilitated access to English reading material through its organization of book exhibitions, participation in Algerian Book Fairs and very large book presentation programmes by presenting books to University-libraries for example. For instance, the English Department of Algiers University several times benefited, though always in insufficient amounts, from this programme. In 1985, the Council took part in two book fairs and a new Council post was created to help meet the enormous demand in books work. For example, with its 1400 public and growing university sector, Algeria was the largest Council outlet for the British library's photocopying service.²⁹ Yet, what was presented by this service remained insufficient. For instance, students in the humanities could not engage in research if they were to rely on what was presented by the British Council. This was due to the then still relatively very limited budget the Council was allocating for Algeria.

However, the Council's capacity to satisfy the high demand for English courses locally started to diminish by 1987/88 as the table below demonstrates :

Year	Number of students
1987-88	2755
1988-89	2739
1989-90	2075

Table

Two.³⁰

In fact, this phenomenon coincided with the Council's shift towards Eastern European countries - where new opportunities were to be seized, leading it to start multiplying efforts to spread its activities and teach English to an increasing number of people³¹ who, because of the new challenges, were asked to pay only a symbolic fee. Thus, the Council was tied by other "duties" and became oriented rather towards meeting in priority, as a result of British Foreign Policy's shift, the needs of Eastern Europe, demonstrating once more the impact of its financial dependence on its government policies. Indeed, asked in 1987 by Mr. Welsh, an FCO Officer, if the Council was increasingly then becoming a mere agent of her Majesty's government, rather than being an independent cultural agency, Mr. John Burgh-a British Council's Director in the 1980s- significantly stated: "[...] There is unquestionably now a smaller area over which the Board of the Council is able to rule".³²

Contrary to what happened in the ex-Soviet Union, the Council's fees strategy in Algeria imposed its important and continuing increase in 1985, as the following table shows :

Year	Number of Students	Enrolment cost fees
1982-83	2428	DA 700
1983-84	2537	DA 700
1984-85	2700	DA 770
1985-86	2727	DA 800
1986-87	2728	DA 950
1987-88	2755	DA 1200
1988-89	2739	DA 1300
1989-90	2075	DA 1300

Table Three.³³

Though Algerian students themselves judged the fees to be very high, they always showed their readiness to pay for British Council services.

In addition, since 1993, the British Council closed its offices in Algeria. One might think that the insecurity problems witnessed since 1992 were behind that or were at least the main reason. To those who hold such an argument, we can mention the example of Lebanon where the Civil war which made ravages from 1975 onwards, did not prevent the Council office, though surrounded by dangers - which in reality cannot be measured in size with those in Algeria - did not close its office or limit its work there just one year after

the beginning of the “unrest” as it did in Algiers ; rather, it did so only eleven years later, i.e., not before May 1986.³⁴ It is most likely that such decisions were motivated by political considerations.

Thus, the British Council's work during the 1980s in Algeria was more intense than it was in Morocco because the former could contribute to the Council's spending more than the latter. But, in both countries, with which Britain had had limited cultural contact in the past, the British Council's activities were relatively insignificant if compared to what the Council performed elsewhere. However, the British Council's expenditure in non-Commonwealth countries in general was subject to cuts because of political considerations which were beyond the Council's Board's power, indeed, and which could only be explained in terms of political choices.

The British Council's attitude to Algeria during the 1980s could, therefore, be explained by Algeria's very position world-wide: its genuine concern with and involvement in African and Arab problems had increased its weight and political influence in Africa and within the Arab Nation with whom Britain had had historical ties and vested interests. On the other hand, the Algerian liberal political and economic reforms witnessed during the 1980s attracted Britain as a potential partner. Consequently, the British Council showed a relatively more dynamic policy in Algeria than in Morocco for its enjoyed political position on the international level in addition to its incomes from

oil which could allow it to contribute to the Council's spending and buy other services from Britain.

The case was different with Morocco which, being a full member of the "Francophony" and having close ties with the USA, became a limited field for British action. Yet, this did not prevent Britain and the British Council office in particular to remain present in Morocco while this was not possible in the case of Algeria during the 1990s. This change may be therefore explained in terms of political opportunities as a criterion for cultural policy, as was illustrated when new promises appeared in Eastern Europe: with the coming of Gorbachev, with whom Thatcher could do business, as she declared after the former's visit to London in 1987, the British Council was to shift Eastwards because what the East offered in terms of politics and economy to Britain was immeasurable compared to what the Francophone South could represent. Whereas Commonwealth countries remained the Council's biggest field of action and interests.

II-The British Council's Policy in Two Former British Colonies : Kenya and India

Both of Kenya and India were fields for the most important and fierce struggle in Africa and Asia against British colonialism. Indeed, Kenyans and Indians distinguished themselves in their struggle against British presence in their countries and fought for a long time to get their independences, which they got at a very high price. As a result, the British were marked by

this experience. Accordingly, during the post-colonial era, they had to multiply efforts to establish new good and close relations in different fields: political, commercial and cultural with both countries. In fact, Britain made each one of these two particular countries the largest single recipient of British aid on its own continent.

Kenya and India had remained very important partners of Britain for their shared historical, political, commercial and cultural ties. Moreover, these two Commonwealth countries had had their weight - in Africa and Asia as well as in the world in addition to their strong activity in international organizations. Indeed, they remained strategic areas where Britain still had extended investments and various interests cultivated a long time before the 1980s. Accordingly, the British Council work in both Kenya and India was intense as the Council's budgets in these two particular countries were mainly provided by government bodies : the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Therefore, it is worth considering British Council's main activities in these countries to illustrate further the linkage between Britain's political considerations and cultural dynamism overseas.

In the parts of the developing world in general and the Commonwealth countries in particular where the British Council was represented, this agency had usually been primarily concerned with three great tasks. At the top of these, there was the Council's

implementation of its own programme of cultural exchange, i.e., setting up a centre and libraries, and administrating its own programme of scholarships, for example. This had been only a portion of the work the Council had been doing. The second task of the Council had been to operate as an Education Adviser for Her Majesty the Queen.³⁵ The third and most important one-not only in financial terms but also in economic and political terms-had been to administer Overseas Development Administration's (ODA) training programmes on which considerable sums of money were spent to prepare future consumers of British production before anything else.

II.A- The British Council's Policy in Kenya

Kenya was a British colony for more than a century. Throughout the period of British administration that began in the 19th century, a particularly close relationship was formed.³⁶ Consequently, in spite of the harsh struggle for independence, the impact of British administrative institutions remained untouched in Kenya. Indeed, as an independent state, Kenya inherited British institutions as well as English as a second language. Such a result revealed British cultural long-term work impact. Moreover, Kenya adopted a capitalist mode of production as a strategy for national development in 1963. In addition, it continually relied on external sources for financing its budgetary deficit and development budget.³⁷ Such an approach on the part of the Kenyans was essentially aimed at strengthening its

relations with the West in general and Britain in particular, since this African country, in parallel, benefited from its promotion of International Capitalism in Eastern Africa as a whole.³⁸ Britain remained Kenya's largest aid donor; "the British Council's budget for Kenya was made up largely of ODA funds for a range of cooperative programmes and projects in education, training and the provision of books".³⁹

In fact, as a Commonwealth country importing more non-oil goods and services from Britain than from any other country and having an economy which relied on the long-term development of national human resources, Kenya provided a fertile ground for the British Council dynamism oriented to strengthen Britain's political, commercial and cultural presence overseas in general and in strategic countries, which were likely to play a role in British Foreign policy, in particular. Thus, and in line with the crucial importance given by the British government and the British Council to overseas students as suggested by official British resources, each year some 600 Kenyan technicians, administrators and researchers were offered training in Britain.⁴⁰ The Council even made Kenya its "British" field where it trained non-Kenyans as well as Kenyans. As was pointed out by its Board: "[...] the Council administer[ed] a small Third Country training programme for non-Kenyans in Kenya".⁴¹ This is suggestive of the extended privileges and unlimited freedom the British Council enjoyed in Kenya to the

extent that the latter seemed to be treated as a British spot.

Since its independence in general and before the 1980s, as a Commonwealth country sharing a common language, close professional, academic and commercial links with Britain, Kenya remained a busy field of action for the British Council which managed British aid there. From 1964 till 1989, Kenya received nearly £600 million in British development assistance.⁴² This aid was granted to support Kenya's structural reform programmes. The educational field remained an important beneficiary of it. This help designed for this particular field was mainly provided in the form of buildings, equipment, books, specialist advisory, officers, training equipment, and through furthering links between British and Kenyan institutions of higher education.⁴³

During the 1980s, this close relation between Britain and Kenya was strengthened by the visit of the Prince of Wales to Kenya and President Moi's several visits to London where he met the Queen and then the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. For instance, in 1987, during a two days visit to Britain, President Moi met Mrs. Thatcher and signed a £50 million aid agreement.⁴⁴ Such aid was only to strengthen political relations between the two countries even at the expense of the OAU and the non-alignment principles Kenya advocated. It might have been, indeed, designed to keep Kenya neutral so that severe sanctions against the

oppressor of another African country could be postponed as was fervently wished by Britain.

As a matter of fact, the year 1989 witnessed Thatcher's most important visit to Kenya, seeking political support concerning Britain's hesitation to sanction South Africa. Britain did not want Commonwealth countries to take severe sanctions against South Africa despite the latter's unhuman policy of Apartheid. As all the members of the Commonwealth did not share the British point of view, Thatcher tried to earn President Moi to her cause, using her diplomatic skills before the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Heads of State meeting in 1989. The primary aim of Thatcher's Kenyan visit revealed, in fact, the closeness of Britain's links with a former colony from which support was expected in needed time on the world scene in particular. Thatcher's praise and wooing of President Moi leadership seemed to target his very support :

As Thatcher's words reveal, not only Kenya's political values but its cultural ones were said to be similar to those of Britain in particular and of the West in general. One may infer that Mrs. Thatcher ignored Kenya's human rights records but rather focused on Kenyan privatization policy which opened wide its markets to British trade as individual efforts and personal endeavour were fervently encouraged by the Kenyan government. Indeed, these few lines suggest that the admiration expressed by Thatcher towards

Moi, the admiration for individual enterprise in an African context came from the fact that it looked in many respect like a cultural innovation given the fact that African culture tended to be rather collectivistic in essence and even tribal in some cases.

The achievement that the Kenyan leader was encouraged to further went against the African grain but corresponded to western values. Thus, the reference to stability was double-edged. Probably to a great extent as a result of this positive assessment, Kenya continued to be the largest single recipient of British aid in Africa. In 1990, Britain gave £389 million in bilateral aid to Africa as a whole and the sum of £44 million was allocated to Kenya alone.⁴⁶ This privilege accorded to Kenya was partly due to the particular interests Britain had in this country. The obvious one was the large number of white settlers of British stock who remained in Kenya after the latter's independence-sustaining British interests through the Kenyan political economic structures which were based on the British model, defended and promoted capitalistic values. Much of Britain's educational aid was provided through the British Council whose work in Kenya was particularly intense in development projects.

Thus, during the 1980s, the Council's increased dynamism went hand in hand with British interests. More specifically and as mentioned to us by the British Council Office in Kenya, its activities in this particular

area of the world during that period could be summarized as follows:

1- Personnel, Education, Training: The Council's work here was mainly in development.⁴⁷ For instance, a wide ranging programme of links and exchanges between Kenyan and British institutions were organized for instance.

2- Books and Libraries: The British Council had three libraries, based in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. There was also a programme of book presentations which provided £400.000 worth of books to Kenyans annually.⁴⁸ Through this programme, the British Council made available up to 25.000 titles to higher education institutions and other key development bodies.

3- No direct English Language Teaching : The British Council was not involved in any direct teaching but supervised a series of educational seminars for ODA, and courses for teachers as well. Moreover, it engaged and supervised key English Language Training Officers to work in Kenyan educational institutions and the Ministry of Education. In fact, these officers were expected to raise the falling standard of English in Kenya.⁴⁹

In 1982, 90% of the Council's budget in Kenya was provided by ODA ; and through the latter's financed Technical Co-operation Programme, the British Council provided, for instance, assistance for tax reform in that country.⁵⁰ Such a programme, thus, went beyond the cultural sphere to be directly

concerned with the domestic policy of an independent country. Indeed, the British Council was seen activating in the policy of the host country as dictated by ODA in the sphere this latter was particularly financing - the Technical Co-operation Programme. The latter was and, in fact, remained the largest in Africa.⁵¹ Each year hundreds of Kenyan technicians, administrators, civil and public servants, scientists, technologists and researchers were and are still trained in Britain. For example, in 1980, the Council arranged programmes in Britain for 505 Kenyans,⁵² This number increased during the following year to reach 548.⁵³ Yet, the British Council had always concentrated on the technical issues that had been of prime importance to its sponsors: the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) which had been financing most of the British Council work in Kenya. For instance, in 1989, more than 80% of the Council's expenditure in Kenya was provided by British government mainly through the above mentioned bodies. It seemed quite likely that Britain felt it could not afford to weaken its ties with this country which had always opened its markets wide to British products.

Understandably therefore, as far as artistic activities were concerned, the Council's budget in this field remained very limited⁵⁴ (in Council terms). The British Council preferred, indeed, to spend money on development and technical activities which backed British investments and provided markets for British products in Kenya than on the promotion of art:

bringing British theatrical companies for example. For instance, it sent individual technical director groups rather than organized tours for whole British companies. In other words, the Council expenditure targeted what could provide more income, as purely cultural and literary activities could not financially speaking, ensure for Britain what technical services could actually do.

With an economy largely dependent on foreign money, Kenya was in need of British aid and assistance to develop its human resources. Given this fact, we can see the British Council was not only assisting Kenya but was an unopposed part in some decision-making agencies of this country. Indeed, it was present in various Kenyan institutions as illustrated above and its services during the 1980s were welcomed by Kenyan authorities even if they involved such sovereignty domains as Tax Reform. In fact, the Council's policy in Kenya reflected Britain's long-term standing political considerations which led to a more developed and focused work of cultural relations during that period, thus targeting technical activities at the expense of purely literary and cultural ones for the simple reasons that the former provided more interesting commercial markets for Britain than the latter did, a pattern which recurred in the case of India.

II.B- The British Council's Policy in India

The Indian sub-continent had been ruled by the British since the mid-eighteenth century.⁵⁵ India was

their largest colony, always referred to as the “Jewel” of the British Crown, particularly during the imperial era. It was under colonial occupation for more than 190 years and its independence in 1947 marked a great watershed in the history of the British Empire. The British policy aimed at creating among the Indians themselves an English-educated middle class with an appreciation of European democratic ideas. This class was expected to support the British colonial administration, though in actual fact, it happened that among its members were found the fore-runners of India's freedom struggle. However, India even after its independence remained very close to Britain. This special Indo-British relationship, as R. W. Bradnock indicated, “Remained of much greater significance than that between India and other middle-power countries”.⁵⁶

Among the reasons of such a distinguished relationship, one can also cite the existence of Indian migrants in Britain. Indeed, Indians constituted the largest minority in Britain. They played an important role in the British society and contributed to the British economy. As was pointed out : “Indians living in Britain have improved the country's culinary arts, added variety and spice to its dietary habits, and [especially] revolutionized its shop keeping”. Many members of this mostly rich community acquired significant financial power, and some of them played an important role in investments and joint - ventures in India. Many more widened the variety and volume of Indo-British commercial and cultural exchanges.

Moreover, an increase in their political participation in Britain was recorded.⁵⁷ Thus, both countries shared close professional academic and commercial links and most important the English language.

Before the 1980s, India was a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations which later on became the Commonwealth of Nations; and in spite of its non-alignment policy, the relationship between London and New Delhi remained very close.⁵⁸ Of course, there were up and down situations in the Anglo-Indian relations, but they never reached hostility. For instance, during the 1980s, the UK High Commissioner who played a remarkable political role in Delhi, prompted by realism, "had to be reconciled, like all other European Ambassadors, to becoming a salesman for this country's goods and services". Relations between Britain and India worsened after the Anglo-American pressure for the Kashmir settlement and Wilson's statement about India's war with Pakistan in 1965. The negative attitude on the part of Britain towards Indian interests, followed by the US-China-Pakistan Triangle, urged India to align itself with the USSR, in an attempt to preserve its own interests.

Accordingly, India's foreign policy in the 1980's was primarily marked by Indo-Soviet friendship. The latter was mainly inspired by political military considerations through the Treaty between these two Asian countries also entailed mutual economic gains.⁵⁹ This Indo-Soviet alignment was threatening

India's neutrality, a fact Britain had always striven to preserve more particularly during the Cold War. Cultural diplomacy was an effective instrument on which Britain relied to keep India's neutrality vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc and to protect British interests from international competitors in Asia. It is, therefore, not surprising that the British Council's operation in India remained the largest in the world as demonstrated by official literature and confirmed to us by an Indian diplomat consulted in London in 1995. Indeed, the British Council continued to play its leading role in developing cultural and intellectual exchanges between Britain and India. In spite of the absence of a clear, well developed cultural diplomacy, British government and the British Council were active in various cultural fields even if technological development was more important than "culture".

Though not making much publicity about its activities in India, the British Council maintained a significantly high level of initiative in this former Jewel of the Crown: it had a number of offices in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it ran four British Council libraries and nine others in association with the India Council for Cultural Relations.⁶¹ In addition, its staff provided technical help to public primary and secondary education. That policy, as the India High Commission in London stated in 1995, continued to advance and progress every year.⁶² The Council's action in India involved Britain's largest bilateral aid programme. As the British Council official data suggested, the

Council's operation in India was a good example of its involvement in the British aid effort. India was the largest recipient of the British aid fund⁶³: in other words, the British Council's activities in this country focused on development projects, allowing Indians to acquire technical skills - in particular - in a number of areas such as medicine, science, and technology. The technological field was particularly a field in which the British Council was interested as regard India because of the high standings technological development Indian scientists enjoyed (witness India's ownership of the Atomic Bomb). Hence, the British Council wanted to put a British stamp on India's technology. In a sense, this was a way of helping British projection and of having a hold on India's power.

In fact, the focus of the British Council on technical activities in general at the expense of purely cultural and literary work, as in the case of Kenya, was oriented by commercial trends because the former were expected to bring much more money than the latter. In modern times, British information technology and computronics were major areas of work for the British Council in India, making Indians aware of the development of British computer - research through its libraries.⁶⁴ The United States also was an area from which computer technology was assimilated. Thus, the Council competed to win the brightest scholars from India as a significant number of them went to the United States in particular because of the facilities and the high standards provided for their research. Such a competing spirit on the part of Britain's cultural

agency, claimed during the 1930s as pursuing a long-term policy, could only serve short-term considerations.

Much of the Council's development work in India, during the 1980s, was actually provided through the Technical Co-operation Training Programme (TCTP), financed by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Indeed, in India, the British Council was actively involved in more than forty ODA collaborative projects. Through TCTP, every year, over a thousand Indian managers, engineers and researchers were sent to Britain for training. For instance, in 1980, the British Council sent 1188 Indians to Britain.⁶⁵ In 1985, this number reached 1501.⁶⁶ Such a programme was more or less fully tied to and was essentially used for promoting exports of British equipment to India. Hence, the British Council contributed to the strengthening of Britain's economic link with a big nation like India which possessed a large market offering opportunities for a lucrative trade. For instance, the fact that Indian mining engineers studied British mining technology at the Bates and Wearmouth collieries in the North East, thanks to the British Council, led to the introduction of the sophisticated long-wall mining equipment into India, a training for up to 46 trainees and a contract worth about £100 million for further equipment.⁶⁷ More than this, "the value of Indian imports of British high-grade chemicals, iron and steel products, power-generating machinery and equipment, various kinds of industrial

machinery and scientific instruments currently exceed[ed] £1bn annually".⁶⁸

The British Council's involvement in India's development assistance received ample appreciation in the Indian political, industrial and commercial circles - as was affirmed to us by an Indian diplomat consulted in London in 1995 - was judged useful on the whole. Britain used its significant influence in support of India's case for development assistance in the meetings of the aid consortia and other multilateral aid agencies.⁶⁹ This British preoccupation with India's development at the international level and the particular British Council way of performing what they were asked - i.e. to administer aid programmes for Britain and other international agencies such as the World Bank-contributed tremendously to the strengthening of Indo-British bilateral relations despite the difficulties caused by a small number of Punjab extremists during the 1980s.⁷⁰

Indeed, by building a bridge - using scientific and technological links - between India and Britain at the people-to-people level, the Council could increase Indian understanding of Britain. During the 1980s, this understanding generated certain warmth. As an Indian diplomat, consulted in London, testified, the British Council had been and still was creating awareness among the ordinary middle class people of India whom the British government targeted as regards its prospects with India's development.⁷¹ The same diplomat summed up positively the general reception of British

Council activities in India. It, indeed, created awareness among the Indian elite of what British education was, what British scientific and technological development was. Moreover, by offering them training under TCTP and other award schemes, the British Council aimed at ensuring India's continuing orientation of its demands towards British markets and institutions despite the Indian policy of diversification which made the USA an essential economic partner. Indeed, in more recent times even during the 1980s, in spite of mutual negative popular images (racist from the one side and anti-colonial from the other), great care was taken that economic interests shouldn't be touched, or that differences be overblown in public speeches. For instance, the president of the British and South Asian Trade Association, Sir Cyril Pitts argued as early as 1981 that "Business ties between India and Britain [were] closer [...] than they had been for a long time; the level of activity [was] higher, the degree of mutual knowledge and understanding much enhanced".⁷² Moreover, the Council's approach allowed Britain to gain a position of considerable influence in India's economic bureaucracy, commercial and industrial circles. For example, in 1985/86, the Indian Government asked Britain to be the main collaborator in the planning and development of the Indian Gandhi National Open University.⁷³

Thus, while Indian and British Foreign Policies were more or less affected by India's friendship with the USSR and Britain's shift towards the European

Economic Community during the 1980s, the British Council led an effective cultural diplomacy to fill any gap and correct misunderstanding of Britain in India. Indeed, to secure British interests and preserve this special relationship between its country and India, the British Council increased its already developed and large range of activities- which amount to cultural diplomacy in the strict sense of the term-in this particular sub-continent, in order to be in contact with a maximum number of target Indians on whom British influence could be exerted because of the existent predilection for British culture amounting to affection. This was a sentiment the British Council tried to develop through its concentrated effort, distinguished dynamism and its maintained structural separation from the British Embassy, suggesting its dissociation from anything directly linked with the political sphere. Indeed, in more concrete terms, such special British Council dealing with India was particularly motivated by British government political considerations which dictated among other things the keeping of this Asian giant neutral vis-à-vis Moscow, avoiding an Indo-Pakistan nuclear union and influencing the Indian elite - among the brightest in the Commonwealth - into preserving prejudices in favour of Britain by wooing them in diverse ways as was made explicit through earlier examples.

Conclusion

Accordingly, generally speaking Britain's political considerations imposed themselves more and more remarkably on the British Council's practice during the 1980s, a fact that urged this "cultural agency" to be more dynamic in Commonwealth countries than in former French colonies (where it appeared with limited efforts) with which the French developed political, commercial and cultural ties. Moreover, though it adopted various policies in different parts of the world, everywhere it was represented, the British Council seemed to focus on the technical field which was directly related to short-term objectives - mainly concerned with Britain's commercial exports through which British influence on the international scene could be extended - than on purely cultural and literary activities. Such commitment to this type of national interests seemed to be directly linked to the nature of the British Council's sponsors, the government bodies the British Council had to deal with, namely FCO and ODA (The Foreign and Commonwealth Office/The Overseas Development Administration) which would further provide an argument for a political approach to some of the British Council's policy

NOTES

1- B. Porter, The Lion's Share : A Short history of British Imperialism 1850-1970, (London, Longman, 1975), p. 92.

2- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report and Accounts 1984/85", (London, The British Council,

1985), ps.23,28,31,32.

3-The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report and Accounts 1988/1989", (London, The British Council, 1989), p.61.

4- A personal Interview, Moroccan Embassy in London (August 1995).

5- Idem.

6- The British Council, op. cit. 1985, p. 23.

7- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1985/86" (London, The British Council, 1986), p. 48.

8- The British Council, op. cit, 1985, p. 23.

9- Idem.

10-During the 1980s, British universities saw their government support decreased and in some cases cut off altogether.

They had to introduce double standards basically by introducing a "home fee", and an "overseas fee". The decision to take away the grant system and to reduce government support for universities urged the latter to find a different way of supporting their own income. Consequently, full overseas fees were introduced.

11- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1979/80" (London, The British Council, 1980), p. 27.

12-The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1980/81" (London, The British Council, 1981), p. 23.

13- Personal interview, op. cit.

14- Idem.

15- Committee for Middle East Trade, "The 1980-84 Algerian Five Years Plan", (London, Comet, April 1981), p. 2.

16- Algeria never accepted Britain's ambivalent attitude towards the white minority in Rhodesia and its support of Ian

Smith who led the UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) and established an illegal government in 1965, as

the inevitable independence of Rhodesia was advancing. This British attitude meant exacerbation of the liberation

movements bitterly led by the two native Rhodesian political parties: ZANU and ZAPU, a fact that strongly affected

Algeria (whose people experienced the same horrors of colonialism as Rhodesia). Algeria's attitude rested on its own

revolution - generated values, as well as on the non-alignment policy.

17-In June 1967 Britain like the USA sided with Israel and participated in the Zionist military attack against the Arab

neighboring countries - namely Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Consequently faithful to its principles of solidarity with liberation causes, Algeria viewed all the actions of the participants in this aggression as acts of hostility.

For further detail on the Maghreb attitude towards the Middle Eastern "Question" see J. P. Chagnolland, Maghreb et Palestine, (Paris, Sindbad, 1977), p. 137.

18- The British Council, op.cit, 1986), p. 34.

19- The British Council, op. cit, 1981, p. 22.

The British Council, op. cit, 1985, p. 20.

20- The British Council, op. cit, 1986, p. 34.

21- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1986/87", (London, The British Council, 1987), p. 44.

22- Britain's share in the Algerian market was only 3% in 1979.

Committee for Middle East Trade, "The 1980-84 Algerian Five Years Plan", (London, Comet, April 1981), p. 1.

23- The British Council, op. cit, 1987, p. 44.

24- Idem.

25- The British Council, op. cit, 1989, p.33.

26- Idem, p.13.

27- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1985/86", (London, The British Council, 1986), p. 34.

28- Obtained from the British Council's Teaching Centre in Algiers 1989/90 and from the British Council annual reports covering the period under study.

29- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1984/85", (London, The British Council, 1985), p. 20.

30- Obtained from British Council's annual reports data.

31- The British Council, "The British Council Annual Report 1987/88", (London, The British Council, 1988), p. 14.

32- House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report :Cultural Diplomacy, (London, HMSO, 1987), p. 38.

33- Obtained from The British Council's Teaching Centre in Algiers 1989/90.

34- The British Council, op, cit, 1987, p. 51.

35- F. Donaldson, The British Council :The First Fifty Years, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1984) p. 354.

36- Her Majesty Stationary Service Office, Britain and Africa, (London, HMSO, 1993), p. 1.

- 37- W.R. Ochieng. A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980, (London, Evans Brothers Limited, 1989), p. 241.
- 38- M. Holman, "Kenya-UK Aid Pact Signed" :Financial Times, March 17th, 1987, p. 4.
- 39- The British Council, op. cit. 1987, p. 51.
- 40- Idem.
- 41- The British Council, op. cit, 1985, p. 22.
- 42- Overseas Development Administration, Britain and Kenya: Partners in Development, (London, Overseas Development Administration, 22 November, 1989), p. 4.
- 43- Idem, p. 18.
- 44- M. Holman, "UK and Kenya Agree to Differ on SA Sanctions" :Financial Times, January 6th, 1988, p. 3.
- 45- L. Hilsum, "Thatcher extols Moi leadership" :The Guardian, January 6th, 1988, Copyright.
- President Moi visited Britain in 1979, in 1980, in 1987 and in 1989.
- 46- Her majesty Stationary Service Office, Britain and Africa, (London, HMSO, 1993), p. 13.
- 47- J. Nance, Assistant Director, The British Council Office in Kenya, 28th July 1993. (He was very brief in answering my questions).
- On December 1987, Mrs. Chalker, Secretary of State for British Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in her statement on UK-Kenyan relations said : "Our relations with Kenya are very friendly and substantial". House of Commons. Parliamentary Debates, Official Report Session 1987-88 (London, HMSO, 1987), p. 562.
 - On the same subject, on March 1989, she said : "We enjoy excellent relations with Kenya. President Moi has just completed a successful visit to London [...]" Parliamentary Copyright.
- 48- Overseas Development Administration, op. cit, p. 27.
- 49- Her Majesty Stationary Service Office, Britain and Africa, (London, HMSO, 1993), p. 13.
- 50- Overseas Development Administration, op. cit, p. 28.
- 51- Overseas Development Administration, op, cit, 1989, p. 27.
- 52- The British Council, op. cit, 1980, p. 26.
- 53- The British Council, op. cit, 1981, p. 22.
- 54- J. Nance, op. cit.

- 55- M. H. Bailey, Britain and World Affairs in the Twentieth Century, (Edinburgh and London : W&R. Chambers, 1971), p. 144.
- 56- R. W. Bradnock, India's Foreign Policy Since 1971, (London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs Printer Publishers, 1990), p. 95.
- 57- K. N. Malik and P. Robb, India and Britain, (New Delhi, Allied Publishers Limited, 1994), p. 111.
- 58- Personal Interview, Indian High Commission in London, (August 1995).
- 59- K. N. Malik and P. Robb, op. cit, p.73.
- 60- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Britain and India :A modern partnership, (London, FCO, September 1997), p. 6.
- 61- The British Council, op. cit, 1986, p. 43.
- 62- Personal Interview, op. cit.
- 63- The British Council, op. cit, 1986, p. 43.
- 64- Personal Interview, op. cit.
- 65- The British Council, op. cit, 1980, p. 26.
- 66- The British Council, op. cit, 1985, p. 32.
- 67- J. Mitchell, International Cultural Relation, (London, Allen &Unwin, 1986), p. 20.
- 68- K. N. Malik and P. Robb, op, cit, p. 95.
- 69- Idem.
- 70- Idem, pp. 101, 102.
- 71- Personal interview, op. cit.
- 72- K. N. Malik and P. Robb, op, cit, p. 85.
- 73- The British Council, op. cit, 1986, p.43.

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