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Contesting colonial rule: Politics of exile in the Indian Ocean

Uma Kothari

Institute for Development Policy and Management, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the compulsory relocation of anti-colonial nationalists from other parts of the empire to Seychelles during British colonial rule. It explores how these colonial policies of forced expulsion that were used to contain anti-colonial political activity unintentionally enabled political exiles to create new trans-imperial networks of resistance. From the late 1800s, the British Colonial Government exiled to Seychelles over 500 anti-colonial leaders and their followers from Egypt, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, Palestine and other colonies; the last political exile was Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios who arrived in Seychelles in 1956. Based on archival and empirical research this paper examines their experiences of exile and how, despite feelings of loss and isolation, they continued to challenge colonial authority by mobilising new forms of contestation. Through a colonial geographical imaginary, Seychelles was constructed as distant, remote and isolated, a place where political agitators could be safely confined and prevented from infecting others with their anti-colonial sentiments. Instead, however, these movements brought colonised people together from across the empire and created spatially extended networks of ideas that became significant in connecting these 'remote' islands to other places. Exiles disrupted the authority of the British Colonial Government through mundane and small acts of resistance in which they made constant, almost daily, demands for their right to return home and better living conditions. This study, on a much under-researched form of imperial mobility and confinement, contributes to debates on colonialism, space and resistance by identifying networks produced by colonised people and, through an exploration of translocal subaltern agency and resistance, confounds place-bound notions of politics.

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1. Introduction

This paper contributes to understandings of the changing, contradictory and contested nature of colonial practices through a study of the compulsory relocation of political exiles and their capacity to create trans-imperial networks of resistance. Far from being an homogenous system of rule, colonialism was replete with shifting and diverse practices and, as the policy of exiling demonstrates, the exercise of colonial authority was highly subjective, contextual and often contradictory. Furthermore, colonial policies and practices did not go unchallenged but, as the forms of agency adopted by exiled anti-colonial leaders highlights, were mediated and resisted in multiple and diverse ways. In order to explore these issues, this paper focuses on the translocal networks created, and forms of resistance adopted, by exiles sent to Seychelles between the late 1800s and mid-1950s. Seychelles provides a particularly instructive example emerging as a colonised space in, and from which, exiles produced networks that contested colonial rule and as a place where colonisers' internal conflicts were played out.

At particular moments during colonial rule attempts were made to squash anti-colonial resistance by physically removing political leaders from their place of origin and relocating them to other colonised sites. While previous studies have examined the kinds of anti-colonial political activity that led to the forcible dislocation and confinement of leaders, how their exile opened up new spaces of resistance remains under-researched. The compulsory relocation of anti-colonial leaders to contain challenges to colonial rule unintentionally fostered new networks of dissent as exiles continued to mobilise against colonial control in innovative ways from new sites, producing new trans-imperial connections. This translocal resistance occurred during a period in which colonial influence was weakening and fragmenting, highlighting the multifaceted and shifting nature of colonial rule. Through a study of exile, this paper also develops recent attempts by geographers to bring considerations of mobility and confinement together by arguing that the very practices of confinement in exile, reveal different types of spatial flows, that ironically helped to mediate and challenge the role of confinement as a form of colonial discipline. The various forms of subaltern resistance that emerged and that connected different colonial spaces, further challenges bounded and territorial understandings of the political that have often informed accounts of anti-colonialism.

E-mail address: uma.kothari@manchester.ac.uk

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The British Colonial Government sustained its power and interests, in part, through the forcible movement of colonised people across the empire. The transportation of convicts to penal colonies, the recruitment and shipment of indentured labour and the exiling of political 'undesirables' were embedded in colonial strategies. Much research has focused upon slavery, convict transportation and indentured labour (Fryer, 1988; Laurence, 1994; Anderson, 2009). However, with few exceptions (Sheller, 2003), the compulsory relocation of political exiles under colonial rule remains under-acknowledged and under-explored: studies that exist focus on the post-independence period (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009) rather than the time of empire. These gaps are more pronounced in the context of colonial policy in the Indian Ocean region generally, and the small island state of Seychelles in particular (Eriksen, 1998, 2001; Scarr, 2000). While research on compulsory movements in this region explores slavery (Shihan and Pankhurst, 2003; Campbell, 2004), indentured labour (see Tinker, 1974; Torabully and Carter, 2002) and convict transportations (Anderson, 2009) there is, with few notable exceptions (McAteer, 2008; Ward, 2009), very little on political exiles. Yet from the late 1800s, nearly 500 prominent anti-colonial leaders and their followers from Egypt, Buganda, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, Palestine and other colonies were exiled to Seychelles. Though people were exiled to other parts of the empire, Seychelles was considered a particularly good 'dumping ground' (Lee, 1976) to 'resettle' those who challenged British authority. Indeed, in the 'British colonial mind Seychelles was linked primarily with the concept of remoteness. As such they viewed it as an ideal place to exile some of the leading opponents of British imperial expansion' (Shillington, 2009, p. 33). Though the term 'exile' is used here, it was not employed by the colonial authorities of the time who preferred to refer to exiling as 'deportations' and those they sent into exile as 'deportees' perceiving this language to be less emotive and political.[1]

This paper is based on research in Seychelles and UK between 2007 and 2010 in the National Archives of Seychelles although apparently not all the documentation is available here as 'the earlier records of the Government on political prisoners appear to have been lost, stolen or eaten by white ants' (Bradley, 1940, vol. 2: ii). Additional material was acquired from the colonial office records in the UK National Archives, where much information relating to policies of exiling is held. These sources were used to document the number, characteristics and experiences of those exiled and gather information on colonial policies of exiling and, the form, extent and content of written communication between colonial officials and, exiles and the Colonial Government. These secondary sources were supplemented with interviews with former colonial administrators who had responsibilities for the Indian Ocean Region, former and serving government officials with knowledge of, or involvement in, the forcible movement of people, surviving family members and compatriots of exiles residing in Seychelles. The narratives and stories of relatives and others effected by policies of exiling provided an understanding of the emergence and continuation of spatial networks and flows. Interviews with the research team at the Seychelles Museum on their process of gathering data for an exiles exhibition provided invaluable information on the experiences of exiles as well as how this part of Seychelles' history is being recorded and represented.

The article begins with a discussion of the relationship between imperial networks and anti-colonial resistance to highlight the spatial and temporal heterogeneity of colonialism and, more specifically, to demonstrate the centrality of networks in sustaining, but also disrupting, colonial authority. The following section on expulsion and exiling as mechanisms of colonial rule reveal the complexities and contradictions inherent within colonial practices. The article goes onto explore the exilic conditions that provided the context for the forms of defiance, resistance and contestation that emerged to challenge colonial authority that are subsequently discussed.

2. Imperial networks and anti-colonial resistance

There have been numerous insights from recent works on historical geographies of empire relevant to this study of colonial rule and trans-imperial networks of resistance. While the metropole-colony binary continues to dominate work on imperial history and historical geography, recent scholarship, informed by post-colonial critiques, challenges the notion of a singular, uniform colonial project implemented across the empire and identifies how a multiplicity of projects and discourses moved through various networks created and maintained between different parts of the empire. They highlight the diversity of 'the agendas of colonial interests, their representations of colonised places and peoples and their practices in relation to them' (Lester, 2006, p. 132) and show how colonial discourses and practices were 'effective precisely because they were enormously flexible and adaptable' (Nash, 2004, p. 113). They were also open to individual interpretation and improvisation as 'local textures of colonialism were immensely complex' (Potter et al., 2003, p. 38), and crucially, colonial administrators, while acting as conduits for dominant colonial discourses, also continually negotiated and mediated these conventions in accordance with their experiences on the ground (Kothari, 2005, p. 430).

Conceptions of empire that invoke notions of networks and 'imperial interconnectedness' have fostered an increasing 'awareness that the colony-metropole interactions. . .were components of much more extensive networks connecting multiple colonial and metropole sites' (Lester, 2006, p. 133). This critique of the metropole-colony binary is further developed by Ballantyne through the metaphor of the web that foregrounds 'the ways imperial institutions and structures connected disparate points in space into a complex mesh of networks' (2007, p. 39). Similarly, Ogborn (2008, p. 7) shows how the organisation and movement of 'constellations, networks or configurations of people, ideas and things' shaped 'Britain's changing place in, and involvement with, the rest of the world'. Lambert and Lester's edited collection includes life geographies of individuals who settled in and travelled across the empire, revealing the heterogeneity of empire and the connections created across it. These studies of 'spatially extended transactions' (Lester, 2002) that connect people, ideas and practices through the lives of individuals (Kothari, 2006) emphasise the need to identify the networks and social relationships, institutional forms and knowledge systems through which they are produced and mobilised (Bebbington and Kothari, 2006).

Though these accounts have enabled a more nuanced understanding of the multiplicity, complexity and changing nature of imperial connections, most continue to focus on networks produced and reconfigured by colonisers rather than their colonised subjects. While Lester notes that colonised people did forge 'new, anti-colonial networks of resistance' that stretched across imperial space (2006, p. 134), the full extent of their mobilities, trajectories and agencies through compulsory relocation and the circulation of ideas, solidarities and resistance that these produced remains largely under-acknowledged. However, Kerry Ward addresses these shortcomings in her study of the Dutch East India Company drawing attention to the networks of resistance forged through the forced transportation of slaves, convicts and exiles. She further argues that the movement of particular political and religious leaders produced 'circuits of exile' through which ideas circulated and

[1] Interestingly, 'deportation' today refers to an asylum seeker or refugee who is *returned* to their homeland against their will rather than forcibly sent away from their country of origin.

anti-colonial resistance developed. This paper will extend this focus by exploring how networks of ideas, cultures, resources and politics were significant in connecting the 'remote' islands of Seychelles to other places and cultural and intellectual traditions, showing more broadly how such spatially and temporally extended networks and solidarities (Routledge and Cumbers, 2009) enabled exiles to mediate and challenge their marginality and exclusion (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998). Additionally, by focusing on networks produced by the colonised rather than their colonisers it challenges privileged western historical narratives (Chakrabarty, 2000).

Conceptualisations of imperial connections further contribute to literature that challenges perceptions of places as bounded, unchanging entities (Massey, 2004). Indeed movements and trajectories of political exiles invoke multiple and changing meanings of place, from and to which people are relocated, and Seychelles exemplifies how places are produced through diverse connections and relations, being constituted through multiple transimperial connections: a meeting place for exiled anti-colonial leaders from different parts of the empire; encounters between exiles, colonisers and Seychellois; continuing relationships with exiles' families and followers in their homeland, and communications between exiles with the Colonial Government in Seychelles, their homeland and London. Some of these connections have been reworked over time and persist in post-colonial connections. Thus, the islands provide an interesting place to study the contradictory and contested nature of colonial rule, as it functioned both as a place from which exiles created and accessed global networks but also where colonisers' internal conflicts were manifest.

Seychelles has always been constituted by global processes. Possessing no original population, it has been thoroughly shaped by various movements of people including French and British colonial administrators, traders, indentured labourers, slaves, plantation owners and exiles and thus has been very much constituted by a multiplicity of political, emotional, commercial, symbolic, cultural and familial connections (Edensor and Kothari, 2003). However, rather than producing placeless spaces within an abstract 'borderless' world, these connections are also historically and geographically specific. The choice of Seychelles as a place of exile, the experiences of exiles and the connections that were produced through their movement occurred in particular spatio-temporal contexts. It is important, therefore, not to lose focus of the situational complexity of exiles' political practices grounded in particular networks that are continually reterritorialised (Featherstone, 2007). It was a specific spatial colonial conception of Seychelles as remote, isolated and deserted that legitimised the forcible movement of populations from other parts of the empire (Kothari and Wilkinson, 2010). Paradoxically, while this imagined geography made it an ideal place to banish political agitators, Seychelles also became an unexpected nodal point in anti-colonial networks of resistance, part of a wider network of connections that include metropoles and other colonies, and thus a nexus for 'flows which constitute subaltern spaces of politics' (Featherstone, 2008) and a site of subaltern agency (Chakrabarty, 2000).

From the beginning, colonisation provoked huge resistance from colonised subjects, although the forms this took were varied and changed over time. Importantly, new geographies of connection and resistance were produced through exiles' compulsory relocation, demonstrating the need to move beyond 'bounded and nation-centred geographies of the political' (Featherstone, 2008) and acknowledge transnational social movements and networks of resistance.

The forced movement of political exiles also foregrounds the relationship between mobility and confinement. While there is a substantial body of work on mobility and migration and an emerging literature on geographies of imprisonment (on cultures of confinement see Dikotter and Brown, 2007), the relationship between the two remains neglected despite the fact that detention often necessitates prior movement to centres of confinement – as the transportation of slaves harrowingly testifies. Yet, though mobility and confinement seem to imply spatial contradictions, as Martin and Mitchelson argue, confinement is 'fundamentally reliant on *spatial tactics*, or the use of space to control people, objects, and their movement (2009, p. 459). Forced movement and confinement were intimately connected colonial practices and the resultant 'detached geographies' impacted upon exiles' access to rights and information (Hyndman and Mountz, 2008). However, as their acts of defiance demonstrate, physical, geographical internment did not suppress the political motivations of exiles and their followers, rather, they were often invigorated by distance and a more spatially extensive sense of political engagement. This paper develops work on the relationship between mobility and confinement by showing how the very practices of confinement opened up new spaces for resistance that were founded upon different kinds of flows and that these, ironically, challenged the colonial authorities by confounding the value of confinement itself.

3. Exiling: colonial strategies of mobility and confinement

This section examines exiling as a colonial strategy to contain anti-colonial dissent and how its use reflected changing forms of colonial control over time and brought to the fore colonisers' internal conflicts and the contradictions inherent within the exercise of colonial rule. Furthermore, as discussed below, the selection of the place of exile signals a specific colonial geography in which certain sites were imagined as distant and remote.

Exiling is a distinct form of exclusion, punishment and translocation that constitutes a significant political strategy to counter opposition and has been used by governments and forms of rule throughout history (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009). During British colonial rule, the forcible movement and subsequent confinement of political 'undesirables' was used to regulate, contain and quash anti-colonial political action from organised oppositions that threatened the continuation and stability of the British empire. As Ghandour (2004, p. 2) writes, once the British had exiled her Palestinian great-grandfather to Seychelles, they could strike his name off 'safe in the knowledge that as he languished on the equator, they could proceed with the business of making policy, without the interference of local bourgeois politicians kicking up a fuss at every turn'.

There were other forms of displacement under British colonial rule but these were significantly different to the strategy of exiling in their purpose and impact on colonial politics, and the temporality, condition and experiences of dislocation. While the transportation of convicts, for example, provided the necessary labour to *establish* colonial settlements, colonial power and interests were partly *sustained* through a strategy of banishing anti-colonial 'agitators'. Furthermore, while convicts received a predetermined prison sentence, exiles were informed that their expulsion would be for an 'indefinite period'. Another important distinction is the extent to which compulsory dislocation was understood as a form of punishment and discipline. Imprisonment of convicts was based on imperatives to punish but also to reform and rehabilitate individuals after a fixed-term prison sentence. Exiling, however, was not primarily driven by a need to promote rehabilitation and moral reformation (Anderson, 2009). It was a punishment levelled at individuals but also a strategy for disciplining others in the exiles' homeland, warning them against further anti-colonial agitation and denying them access to their leaders. This is evident in a correspondence from the Governor of the Gold Coast to the Administrator of Seychelles: 'The object of sending them to Seychelles was not only to remove the possibility of future trouble which might have existed had these people remained in this colony but also

to deter others following their example in the belief that a rebellion if unsuccessful carries with it no serious punishments' (C/SS/2 No. 236). Similarly, referring to the exile of Egyptian nationalist leader, Zaghlul Pasha, to Seychelles, *The Daily Express* in London (1923) reported, 'it is undesirable to consider the return of an influence that could stir up renewed turmoil and disturbances'.

Exiling was only one of various possible mechanisms for dealing with opposition. While in some colonial contexts and historical periods 'agitators' might have been annihilated, the use of exile reflects the spatio-temporal heterogeneity of colonialist practices. At certain times it was in the interests of the Colonial Government to adopt more 'moderate' methods of squashing anti-colonial movements. There was always the potential for revolt that exterminating leaders might provoke but also, from the early 1900s there was growing unease within metropolitan societies concerning the inhumane treatment of colonised subjects. Furthermore, the British Government, keen to distance itself from the perceived 'savagery' of the colonised, presented itself as morally superior by exiling rather than killing opponents. Under the directive of the Colonial Secretary, the District Commissioner in Elmina (Gold Coast) wrote to the Ashanti prisoners in Seychelles reminding them that 'your punishment is not such as would have been given to you if you had fought and been vanquished by black men. In that case you would have been killed. Mercy has been granted to you' (CO 879/67/3).

The desirability of exiling as a form of colonial discipline was challenged more vociferously from the early 1920s by those in the metropole advocating for a more humanitarian imperial project. Nevertheless, disagreements tended to focus less on the policy of exiling itself but more on the advisability of sending into exile certain individuals. This was apparent in the case of Zaghlul Pasha as is evidenced in an exchange in the House of Commons in 1922 (HC Deb 14 March 1922 vol 151 cc2009-12) during which Mr. Lunn, Member of Rothwell, interrogates the Government as to the reasons for deporting Pasha arguing that 'You can never have peace in Egypt until you see that this man is returned to his home and his friends, and if he should die in the land he has been deported to this Government will be proclaimed with murder'. Furthermore, the financial costs of exiling including transportation and living expenses were thought by some in the Colonial Government to be excessive, along with the burden of administration and policing placed on Governors. Consequently, Governors did not always receive exiles without complaint and in a confidential despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the Governor of Seychelles wrote, 'I shall... be very grateful if you should think fit to consult me in the first instance before His Majesty's Government decides to deport further prisoners to Seychelles. I shall then be given an opportunity beforehand of expressing my views as to the practicability of the proposed arrangement' (CO 879/67/3). Despite this opposition, exiling represented an important strategy to contain powerful nationalist figureheads, though not one that was adopted throughout the colonial period, it became increasingly significant at a time when independence movements were gaining momentum and as such reflects shifting practices of colonial governance.

The geographic extent of empire meant that the Colonial Government could make use of 'remote' British territories to contain perceived political threats. Establishing a geography of exile through invoking existing imperial networks, this strategy functioned using multiple forms of power to punish, discipline and confine. The administration of exiling was immensely complicated and involved an extensive network of individuals, connected across the empire. Given the high profile of the leaders sent into exile and the sensitivity of the (real and imagined) political consequences of their deportation, the process had to be dealt with at the highest levels of the British Government and often in great secrecy. Those lower down the colonial hierarchy were often only kept informed of those aspects of the process as functionally necessary and this created numerous internal conflicts. Moreover, the implementation of the strategy was hugely bureaucratic and copious communiqués were exchanged between the British Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Members of Parliament, Governors and Administrators in sending and receiving colonies, shipping companies, local police, accountants, doctors and exiles themselves. This extensive documentation, administration and bureaucracy associated with the movement of each exile and the management of their settlement and regulation demonstrates how power does not simply flow unproblematically through networks but must be managed and mediated at every step (Allen, 2003).

Geography makes a difference to the exercise of power and the choice of where to banish dissidents was significant in shaping how colonial power was employed and experienced. Spatial isolation was a key characteristic in determining this geography of exile (Strange and Basford, 2003) and islands were seen as particularly good locales for containment. Referring to the Andamans, Anderson (2007, p. 21) confirms that the landscape of the islands provided a 'natural prison' such that 'in the absence of secure places of confinement or sufficient personnel, the threats posed by the unknown jungle, sea and inhabitants comprised the convict guard'. The specific choice of Seychelles as a destination for 'undesirables' was partly based on this ease of containment, from and to which communication would be extremely difficult. British authorities saw Seychelles as the least accessible place in the empire as is disclosed in a telegram from the Colonial Office to the Administrator of Seychelles in 1900, in which the Governor is requested to 'arrange for detention of prempeh and other ashanti chiefs in the Seychelles islands – from which they would be unable to communicate with ashanti' (C/SS/2 vol II). This need to restrict contact with others is reflected in the decision in the early 1920s to stop using 'Ceylon' (present-day Sri Lanka) as a place of exile to prevent exiles 'getting into contact with Indian agitators, both in person and by correspondences' (C/SS/2 vol VIII). In contrast, Seychelles was imagined as quintessentially remote, isolated, unconnected and largely devoid of 'civilised' and 'politicised' populations. This reflects the ignorance amongst the British Administration about Seychelles, as exemplified in an exchange reported in Hansard in 1922 in which a Member of Parliament refers to the islands as 'one of the most deadly places in the *Pacific*...where there is not a single fully-qualified man on the island to deal with any complaint' (emphasis added HC Deb 11 July 1922 vol 156 cc1154-61). Seychelles, islands in the Indian Ocean and not the Pacific, was simply understood as an isolated place to which exiles could be safely contained with no fear of infecting others with their political sentiments.

Colonised subjects, however, were not so effectively disciplined. Despite being portrayed by colonialists as an isolated place without a distinct history or society, Seychelles has long been shaped by flows of ideas, people and resources across extensive geographic regions. Exiles added further connections that were significant in forging solidarities and shaping acts of resistance. Accordingly, the use of colonial networks to manage opposition, unintentionally extended the spaces and spheres of anti-colonial contestation by the exiled and their supporters. Below, I detail the exilic contexts within which this resistance developed.

4. Political exiles and their exilic conditions in Seychelles

In 1877, Sultan Abdullah of Perak was the first to be exiled to Seychelles under British rule following imperial expansion in the Malayan peninsular and accusations of his involvement in the murder of the first British resident in Perak. He was accompanied

into exile by his mother, four wives, seven children, the governor, a judge, the port officer and servants and remained in Seychelles until 1895. One of the best known exiles, King Nana Agyinian Prempeh of Ashanti, arrived in Seychelles in 1900 with 55 followers following the Ashanti territory being declared a British protectorate. He was not allowed to return home to Gold Coast (now Ghana) until 1924.

Two other kings were exiled to Seychelles during this period – so at one time there were three African kings in Seychelles under order of the British: King Prempeh, the Kabarega of the Bunyoro, who returned to his homeland in 1923, and Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda, who died in Seychelles in 1903. In 1920, they were joined by the Sultan of the Warsengeli Tribe, Muhammud Ali Shirreh, exiled from Somalia because 'his independent policy, strength and indifference to the powers surrounding him, including the British has vexed London and led to his arrest and deportation' (Somali newspaper quoted in Wardheernews.com 2005). Actively opposed to their rule of Somaliland, the British suspected that he would be a source of trouble and were anxious about the costs of a protracted conflict. He was allowed to leave Seychelles in 1928. Some of these exiles were companions of Egyptian nationalist leader Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha, exiled in 1920 along with five of his cabinet ministers who had participated in the national movement of 1919. As head of the Wafd party demanding Egyptian independence, Sa'ad Zaghlul was first deported to Malta and later to Seychelles and Gibraltar before being released and permitted to return to Egypt in 1923. His exile precipitated mass uprisings and had serious political repercussions in Egypt as well as provoking much debate in the House of Commons in London.

In 1937 members of the Arab Higher Committee in Palestine, Hussein Fakri Effendi Al Khalidi, Fuad Effendi Saba, Ahmed Hilmi Pasha, Yacoub Bey Gussein and Rasheed Haj Ibrahim, who had called for non-payment of taxes, a general strike of Arab workers and businesses, and an end to Jewish immigration were arrested and sent into exile. Their exile was precipitated by their suspected involvement in the assassination of the Acting British District Commissioner of Galilee, Lewis Yelland Andrews. Others exiled for actively opposing British rule included Seyid Khaled bin Bargash, the Sultan of Zanzibar along with 20 followers in 1921. The last political exile sent to Seychelles in 1956 for fighting for the independence of Cyprus, was Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios (Mihail Christodolou Mouskos) accompanied by three of his compatriots, collectively referred to as the 'Turbulent Priests'. Makarios rejected the British Government's Radcliffe Constitution for the settlement of the 'Cyprus Question' and consequently when released 13 months later it was on the condition that he should not return to Cyprus.

Aware of the class, political and intellectual status of these prisoners the British authorities were mindful of the style and standard of living to which they were accustomed. All exiles were housed in Mahé, the main island, and their living arrangements were largely considered comfortable and satisfactory. For instance, Pasha and his followers resided in a large house in Bel Air with few restrictions on their movement amusing themselves by giving 'at home dinner and card parties'. Concessions were also made to exiles' demands for better health care facilities, clothing and education for their children (see CO879/67/3). The British were attentive to how any perceived (mal)treatment of exiles would agitate followers and create further challenges to colonial rule and, at times, this led to a blurring of boundaries between coloniser and colonised. For example, the Sultan of Perak, a keen sportsman, was a member of the Victoria Cricket Club, and played alongside the Chief Civil Commissioner, the Chief Justice and other members of the British administration.

This treatment of exiles, the relative comfort of their accommodation and their generous monthly stipend created some ambivalence and disagreement among colonial administrators about the prominence accorded to political prisoners. It also reflected some of the inherent contradictions in how colonial power was exercised and the distinctions between coloniser and colonised. The Governor of Seychelles showed his irritation in a letter to the High Commissioner of Egypt (1922) when petitioned by Zaghlul Pasha to increase his allowance: 'Pasha already receives Rs750 as not only is he the most important member of the party but he is on a diet in which champagne appears to play an important role' (C/SS/2 vol. VIII). And the Governor of the Gold Coast felt compelled to admonish the Administrator of Seychelles reminding him that deportation 'has still some terrors to the Ashantis which will disappear if they think that those detained in the Seychelles are treated rather as guests than as prisoners' (C/SS/2 vol I). To assert their authority and remind exiles that they were prisoners of His Majesty's Government, British administrators periodically tightened up on restrictions as in the case when Makarios was informed that he could not leave his lodge grounds without an escort or communicate with anybody outside its barbed wire perimeter (Pillay, 1989). In another strategy to maintain distance and superiority, the British mocked behaviour that alluded to grandeur and belittled attempts by colonised exiles to mimic the lifestyle that was seen to be the preserve of the British. In a House of Commons debate, MPs found it 'humorous to hear him (Pasha) described as His Excellency' (HC Deb 11 July 1922 vol 156 cc1154-61). And, in a communiqué between the Governors of the Gold Coast and Seychelles, the latter writes, 'Ex King Prempeh suffers greatly from an excess of personal vanity…I receive periodical requests from him for a man of war to convey him and his retinue to proceed to Europe to visit His Majesty King George and other requests that show the exuberance of vanity' (C/SS/2 vol III).

For many exiles, irrespective of their favourable living conditions, their experiences were epitomised by feelings of isolation, dislocation and loss of entitlement. As Archbishop Makarios said, 'if I had stayed at Sans Souci under other circumstances, I could have been happy' (Le Geyt, 1961, p. 22). Many suffered health problems associated with or exacerbated by the stress of exile, as noted in a House of Commons debate on the need to provide medical treatment for Zaghlul Pasha suffering from diabetes: 'Is it not a fact that mental worry—and there is no doubt this gentleman must be suffering from mental worry in his present surroundings—is one of the most serious and aggravating ancillary causes of diabetes?' (Dr. Murray HC Deb 11 July 1922 vol 156 cc1154-61). Exiles' anxieties were borne out of being banished from their homelands, geographically relocated to unknown distant lands and separated by colonial design from their communities and influences (Anderson, 2007). This led to a profound sense of 'social dislocation and rupture' (Anderson, 2009, p. 94) and many experienced a 'crippling sorrow of estrangement' (Said, 2001, p. 173) further deepened by temporal uncertainty, as is evident in an emotional reflection by Ghandour (2004, pp. 1–2) when interpreting a photograph of her Palestinian great-grandfather in exile. She writes that he 'looks as if he's taking it easy. He could be on holiday. And then I notice on the wall to his left there hangs a small picture. The spiral coils along the top, the blurry columns of numbers running horizontally beneath a photograph, confirm it's a calendar. Grandpa was marking time. He was under house arrest. This was not relaxation, it was enforced passivity'.

For most, however, their exile was not experienced passively, nor did it mean 'years of aimless wandering away from family and familiar places' (Said, 1993). Exiles to Seychelles were not usually deported alone as the British Government saw advantages in allowing them to travel with family: 'the more content the prisoner was with his surroundings the less likely he was to cause trouble' (Lee, 1976, p. 46). A prison guard sympathetically remarked to the Governor of Seychelles in response to a letter from

the Sultan of Somaliland requesting permission to keep a 'respectable woman in my house' that 'it is a pity that he has been sent over here without the company of one of his wives' (C/SS/2). In an extreme case, Prempeh was exiled together with 55 companions including wives, children, followers and servants. Exiles' feelings of solitude were, therefore, mediated by the proximity of familiar others but also, importantly, through continued political engagement. Most were actively and regularly engaged in challenging their predicament. While as Said (1993) wrote, exiles may exist in 'a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting, nor fully disencumbered of the old; beset with half-involvements and half-detachments', they also had the means to form new identities, create fresh attachments and articulate multiple forms of agency. Exilic conditions are thus highly complex; feelings of loss and isolation sitting alongside new connections and affections in which exiles may feel simultaneously near and distant, involved and detached, connected and isolated. Importantly, as shown below, although exiling was a colonial strategy to contain dissent, the confinement of political leaders ironically opened up new political spaces and flows that transgressed these imposed boundaries.

5. Agency, contestation and resistance

In deploying their spatially extensive connections and imperial networks to contain and manage anti-colonial resistance through exile, the British inadvertently facilitated new transnational encounters and forms of anti-colonial resistance. Although the power imbalance was overwhelmingly in favour of the British authorities, conditions of exile did not imply a closing off of autonomy and agency (Alvite, 2009). Never fully accepting their condition, exiles became skilled in daily strategies of dissonance (see Said, 1993). This resistance was multi-sited, simultaneously related to nationalist politics of independence in a distant homeland and forms of engagement in colonised Seychelles, their 'host' country. As trans-territorial presences, exiles were able to create more extensive spatialities of resistance and contestation.

In their homelands, followers tirelessly campaigned for the release of their leaders through petitioning the authorities and mobilising demonstrations. For example, referring to the outrage at his banishment, Pasha wrote in his memoirs, 'Regardless of the nature of the events that occurred in Egypt following our departure, they were more cataclysmic than anyone could ever have predicted. They have turned the tables against the colonising power and alerted the entire world to the fact that there is an oppressed nation calling out for justice'. Consequently, one MP in the House of Commons stated, 'During the last few weeks I have seen... protests in abundance from Egypt showing that practically the whole of the people, moderate or extreme, educated or uneducated, are taking steps, either of a mild or a severe character, against his deportation' (HC Deb 14 March 1922 vol 151 cc2009-12). Members of Wafd warned the British authorities that intimidation would not deflect the nation from its 'higher pursuit, regardless of the forms of terror it is forced to endure in that pursuit'. Further supporters were evident amongst diasporic groups in the centres of imperial rule who campaigned on behalf of their compatriots in exile.

On the other hand, the impact of the exile of one leader could be felt in other colonised nations, as with Makarios, whose 'struggle for freeing his country from colonial rule inspired other colonies to do likewise and became a symbol of the anti-colonial era' (Seychelles Nation 14.03.2006). This agitation influenced the opinions of members of the opposition in the House of Commons, who spoke out against the Government's use of exile as a form of discipline and complained about the treatment of those in exile. Together these different agents and strategies of resistance politically connected homelands, Seychelles and London.

Many 'displaced nationals discovered, rediscovered or rather invented the "collective soul" of their countries' (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009, p. 9), for although spatial confinement constrained their activities it did not sever their relations with their homelands. Indeed, once in Seychelles, exiles' resistance was invigorated by the knowledge of continued activity in their home countries. Spatially displaced, exiles' activism reflected a heightened sense of national loyalties (Shain, 2005), through which they exhibited the transnationality of thought, politics, identity, emotions and practices of the 'long distance nationalist' invoked by Anderson (1998; see also Baldinetti, 2003). For example, members of the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine regularly protested to the Governor of Seychelles that their deportation was 'declared to satisfy Zionist dictating Palestine Policy' and that such 'unjustified measures are a blot recorded in British history' (CO 733/333/10). In lengthy letters sent from exile they continued to protest the compulsory dissolution of the Arab Higher Committee. They went onto suggest that the Government in Palestine 'is under the influence and undue pressure brought about by Jews and Zionists both in Palestine and in England' and challenged the civility of the British by arguing that 'the elementary duty of any Government is to preserve peace and order. This cannot be done by drastic and terroristic methods but only by impartiality, fairness, justice and good Government (CO 733/333/10). In one letter, they conclude that 'not until every Arab is deported or evicted will His Majesty's Government be able to establish the Jewish National Home or a Jewish State in Palestine' (CO 733/333/10: 58). The condition of their exile further revitalised exiles' defiance, for they had no indication of how they were expected to reform in order to be allowed home or any sense of the duration of their banishment (for some their length of exile was 13 months while others were not allowed to return home for more than 20 years). These unknowns fuelled the form and extent of their opposition.

These continued engagements with struggles in the homeland should not obscure the significant effects of exiles' encounters with the people and societies to which they were relocated. Colonial administrators, while acutely aware of the potential for rebellion and revolt in other parts of the empire, having characterised Seychelles as isolated, remote and inhabited by 'passive' peoples, were less concerned about the trouble the political exiles could stir up on the islands. However, given their political histories and identities there was always the potential for exiles to forge new allegiances.

While other colonies bemoaned the fact that 'the very dregs of the population' were transported there (Singapore Free Press quoted in Anderson, 2007, p. 17), Seychellois were mainly welcoming of the exiles. Some did resent their islands being seen as a 'dumping ground', fearing the relocation of 'troublesome people' (Scarr, 2000) into their midst, but many appreciated the new ideas and connections the incomers conveyed. The arrival and settlement of exiles connected Seychellois to a geography of empire and resistance beyond their islands and a raised consciousness of their own position within a larger colonial world, one replete with colonised people similarly subject to British rule. In various ways and to differing degrees, the presence of exiles affected the mind set of Seychellois, and was empowering in stimulating their own acts of resistance. As Seychelles Minister of Finance said (interview 2010), the movement of exiles to Seychelles gave the country a relevance and importance in the empire at a time when it had very little.

The arrival of exiles was itself a significant event on Mahé, one embodied in the idea and image of the ship. Ships conjured up connections and distance between places and people, for while they connected Seychelles to distant lands, their infrequent presence

also acted as a reminder of geographical remoteness (see Hasty, 2011). In memoirs and official documents of colonialists, exiles and Seychellois the name of the ship on which someone boarded or disembarked and the times of arrival and departure was noted. Local newspapers covered the comings and goings of exiles, charting their journey through texts and maps, and photographs showed large crowds gathered at the harbour to see ships arrive, particularly when carrying notable figures such as Archbishop Makarios. These ships imaginatively connected ordinary Seychellois to distant places, and as former President Mancham said, 'no country is small if it is surrounded by the sea' (interview 2010).

Besides connecting Seychellois to other places, exilic movements also brought together colonised people from across the empire that transformed their self-perception. The exiled African kings had a profound impact on Seychellois. Prempeh in particular was seen as a role model; an African king given a large house and land owned by a white man, regularly seen roaming around town with his entourage dressed in full colourful, regal robes, who the local British authorities appeared to treat as royalty. His presence in Seychelles particularly empowered former slaves of African origin, who rather than accepting the racialised discourses of British and the earlier French, colonialists, now had an alternative symbol of Africa to whom they felt connected and who inspired positive thoughts about those that they had been led to believe were, like them, inferior, incompetent and uncivilised. As Bishop French Chang-Him recounted, 'they couldn't believe that in Africa there were African *kings*, who were educated, knowledgeable and taken seriously, even respected, by the British' (interview 2010). The African Seychellois were also now able to defy the condemnation they had long received from the Catholic church for not getting married, for Prempeh not only cohabited, but had multiple relations with local women. Yet, he was not only allowed into the Church but given a seat in the front row, normally the preserve of the white French settlers. Prempeh, thus effectively disrupted the power of white settlers and colonialists to represent African people as signifiers of inferiority and use this to justify their authority. As the current Bishop of Seychelles reiterated, 'the former slaves could identify with the exiled kings in Seychelles who also had a significant part to play in the extent to which cohabitation is accepted on the islands today' (interview 2010). Certain movements of exiles thus developed cultural connections from other parts of colonial Africa to Seychelles, creating new networks of anti-colonial resistance.

Direct political links were also forged as exiles connected Seychellois with other intellectual traditions and forms of suffering under colonialism. The Palestinians were particularly effective in linking their plight with those of other colonised people and highlighting 'His Majesty's Government's implementation of similar policies of repression in other places' (CO 733/333.10). Accordingly, the Palestinians were subjected to close surveillance by the British authorities and the Governor of Seychelles was minded to inform them that there was 'total prohibition of communication with any member of the public without the permission of the guard or in his absence' (CO 733/333/10). Despite these restrictions, however, cultures of engagement, new structures of solidarity and enduring forms of conviviality were produced (Illich, 1973; Gilroy, 2004). For example, the Sultan of Perak, spent much time with Seychellois with whom he communicated his ideas about freedom and self-determination and who subsequently signed petitions for his release (Durup, undated).

On leaving, many exiles had grown attached to Seychelles and Seychellois, as with Archbishop Makarios, who wrote 'when our ship leaves the harbour we take with us many good and kindly memories of the Seychelles...may God bless them all'. And in a farewell letter to the Seychellois, Prempeh wrote 'During the 24 years of my exile in the Seychelles, I have appreciated the kindness of one and all in this community with whom I have had very friendly relation. Although I will be far from you, I shall never forget the unfailing courtesy and respect shown to me by all classes of the population (Le Petit Seychellois, 14.8.1924).

Many of these connections continued beyond the time of empire and exile and have had a lasting impact on the identity of post-colonial Seychelles. For example, artefacts and material resources were left behind, such as Prempeh's numerous walking sticks, or the many types of fruit that Perak introduced to Seychelles. One such was the '*banane mille*,' which can produce 1000 bananas in a bunch, is resistant to disease and has continued to contribute to the country's economy. More famously, at the end of his exile, one of the Sultan's daughters played a Seychellois tune, *La Rosalie*, on the piano, which later became the tune for '*Negaraku*' (My Country), the National Anthem of Malaysia (Durup, undated).

Numerous descendants of exiles are further evidence of contact between exiles and Seychellois. Several Ashantis married Seychellois women and some of their grand-children continue to reside on the islands. The Sultan of Somaliland left behind two children who no one had heard of until a chance meeting in 2004 between the grand-daughter of the Sultan and a Djiboutian diplomat. Following this, Muhammud Garad, son of the Sultan, was invited by the Seychelles Government to visit 'in a bid to explore newly founded family ties and become acquainted with the country of his father's exile' (Seychelles Nation, September 2004).

In addition, important political and economic relations were forged following decolonisation when Seychelles and other newly independent states were constructing their own post-colonial identities and seeking solidarity with other parts of the world. In the 1970s, the then President of Seychelles, Albert Renee, developed economic and political relations with Malaysia and Cyprus and because of his foreign relations with the latter, had no relations with Turkey for many years. As Mancham stressed, the 'link between Cyprus and Seychelles has lived on' (interview 2010) through, for example, the Scholarship fund established by Makarios that continues to support the education of school children from poor households. Makarios also bought 10 acres of land which on his death was donated to the Seychelles Government. In 2005, Seychelles Vice President, Joseph Belmont, paid a courtesy call on the Asantehene when he attended the African Union Summit in Accra, inviting them for a visit to Seychelles (www.ghana.gov.gh/seychelles). In accepting the invitation – 'but this time not as an exile' – Otumfo Osei Tutu II reported that when Prempeh returned from exile, he had profound memories of the Seychelles. A recent exhibition in the Seychelles Museum on Exiles (2010) has also brought to the fore this important moment in the history of the islands and its continuing legacy.

While the forms of engagement described above were effective in creating lasting links between exiles and Seychellois, other small acts of resistance were found in mundane encounters and communications between exiles and their colonisers. Unable to attempt escape, given the geography of their prison island, and more practically, because their 'presence in town on mail days' when ships were in port was disallowed (CO 733/333/10), exiles adopted subtle forms of negotiation and resistance. Trapped in a situation in which there was no guaranteed strategy to ensure their return, they developed a range of tactics to challenge and disrupt the authority of the British. These included often ambiguous rescinding of their political ambitions, contrived declarations of eternal allegiance and servitude to the British, claims to poor and failing health and drawing attention to the illegality of their exile. Although they often made demands for improved living arrangements and regularly disobeyed the conditions of their exile such as breaking curfews, their priorities were, inevitably, focused on securing their release. Returning home was a constant focus of exiles' petitions and a range of different forms of negotiations emerged, managed and manipulated by exiler and exiled alike.

A common strategy to seek redress for their grievances was to access micro-levels of power (Kuhn, 2008). Archbishop Makarios and his followers went on hunger strike when police dogs were brought into enhance security against their escape and prevent contact with anyone from outside. However, most exiles utilised instead their intellectual and cultural capital to assail the colonial administration with a steady flow of written correspondence which could not easily be ignored. Letter writing reflected a micro-level of political engagement that effectively re-placed geographically isolated exiles within a wider imperial network. Emerging at a time when anti-colonial agitation was increasing, these reminders to the British connected exiles to networks, relationships and hierarchies of empire. Letter writing was a feature of their everyday lives and written petitions were taken seriously by the colonialists aware that they were easier to deal with than outright revolt. Perhaps more importantly, writing was much admired by the British who had developed a well established letter writing culture with its attendant modes of address, convention and aesthetics. Indeed, networks across the empire were sustained through letters, perceived as an educated and elite form of communication legitimised by the authorities. Thus, the use of letter writing by exiles fitted well with British sensibilities and conventions and became an acceptable form of 'gentlemanly' communication. But, it also constituted a condition of their detention as in the case of the Palestinians who were informed that 'representations on any matter must be submitted in writing' (CO 733/333/10). At the same time, letter writing kept the exiles occupied, alleviated boredom and ensured that they were not further isolated or forgotten by the authorities.

As is evident from the amount of correspondence archived in the colonial office records, exiles were prodigious letter writers. In part this was a strategy for dealing with resentments, loss and separation. While many exiles turned to writing to occupy their days and record their experiences, those in Seychelles were not composing autobiographies or novels but were communicating through letters home to family and compatriots and, most frequently, to the Colonial Government responsible for their exile. This agency was keenly felt by a colonial regime compelled not only to respond to each missive but to pass every letter received up the colonial hierarchy from the Governor to the Colonial Office in London and beyond for their consideration, however mundane the content. The Palestinian exiles, for example, insisted that 25 copies be made of their petition for better living conditions, and be submitted by the Governor of the Seychelles to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner for Palestine, the Permanent Mandates Commission as well as to the Prime Minister, both Houses of Parliament, and the Secretary of the Council of the League of Nations (CO 733/333/10).

The perceived injustice of their exile and the deep frustration of not knowing when they would be repatriated or indeed what they would have to do to make possible their return meant that many exiles spent inordinate lengths of time composing letters to the Governor requesting they be returned to their homeland. Prempeh, despite his appeals to be returned being consistently denied, continued to deluge the authorities throughout his 20 years of exile. The Governor of Seychelles acknowledging this writes, 'he is very patient under rebuffs, when told his requests are impossible, but somewhat persistent in their repetition' (C/SS/2 vol III). Shirreh, similarly persisted in his requests to be repatriated but was repeatedly refused as is evident in a letter from the Governor of British Somaliland to the Governor of Seychelles in which he writes, 'Again, I regret that I am unable to agree his release at the present time' (C/SS/2 vol VI). In these letters, 'wilfulness, exaggeration and overstatement' (Said, 1993) were characteristics of being in exile and constituted covert strategies of resistance. Prempeh would playfully remind the British that he was a King while simultaneously demonstrating his willingness to accept that he might be a lesser one: 'I the ex king Prempeh. . .beg to wish a happy and prosperous reign to our Majesty and may God prosper him to reign for the longest and most peaceful reign that had never been heard since the foundation of the world' (C/SS/2 Vol II: 36). In a hyperbolic letter the Sultan of Somaliland implored the colonial authorities to be allowed to return home, rescinded his political beliefs and agreed to live obediently under British rule in his home country: 'As my Master, Excellency listen to my poor voice and let me return home. 'Pardon' I am asking, I promise to be obedient and respectful towards English people, I would not like any more to be Sultan, what I should like is to be under the orders of Englishmen' (C/SS/2 17.7.1922). In a similarly exuberant letter Prempeh wrote, 'By your kind treatment toward us since in your charge, we regret most sincerely if we look upon our evil life in Ashanti. . .we declare to you that the anguish and remorse occasioned by having once offended you are too galling and acute for us ever to attempt repetition of the offence. We, therefore, beg you most humbly to have pity on us and send us back to Ashanti' (CO 839/67/3). Webb (1965: 100) however, maintains that these declarations of remorse were unconvincing to the authorities since 'the circumstances of his position may have tamed Prempeh outwardly, but evidence is lacking that he ever came to regard his past blood-lust with any feelings of remorse'. Other reasons were put forward to be returned home. Many claimed that the Seychelles climate did not suit them as in the case of Khaled bin Bargash who wrote to the Governor of Seychelles, 'I have the honour to inform you that the climate of these islands are not agreeable to me or my people. Therefore I request that you may ask the Tanganyika Government to allow me to return to my home'. And, in an attempt at flattery he continues, 'I hope that, as a clever man you will see how hard it is for me and family ' (C/S/2 vol VII: 188-19). Despite many failed requests to be repatriated, exiles continued to hassle the authorities with their petitions in a subtle form of defiance; a reminder to the British that they had not acquiesced, would not be silenced and refused to accept their predicament.

Letters expressed not only demands for release but more mundane concerns such as the adverse effects of the inclement weather, dietary and other requirements based on differences in customs and culture, requests to marry or divorce and medical needs. Exiles were aware of the impact of these written grievances and requests on a colonial authority fearful of offending or further alienating them given the potential for unrest once news of their poor treatment reached followers in their home countries. Prempeh played on this concern when he wrote to family back home disingenuously informing them that he was being forced to follow Christian rites by getting rid of his wives and contracting a legal marriage with only one of them. He wrote, 'the English are entreating me to marry and I refused. . .But as you would know that a servant cannot challenge his master and it is always the master who is the gainer'. On hearing of this (mis)communication, the Governor of the Gold Coast asked the Governor of Seychelles to admonish Prempeh for communicating this 'falsehood' since 'any impression, however, unfounded, which ex-King Prempeh may convey to his friends that he is being coerced by the English authorities in a matter such as this cannot but tend to produce mischievous results in Ashanti' (CO 839/67/3).

Exiles were also prolific in their letters to family and compatriots although controls over their correspondence were imposed so as to prevent exiles from rousing anti-colonial sentiments from afar. The authorities saw 'censorship as desirable in the public interest' and in the case of the Palestinians insisted that 'if any uncensored Arabic letters are received in Seychelles it is necessary to return these to Palestine for examination' (CO 733/333/10). Yet, despite edicts that letters should be censored, exiles effectively circumvented these rules and with surprising

regularity corresponded with home. For example, as noted by the Governor of British Somaliland, Shirreh 'has contrived to send letters to this country by the hands of Somali seamen. The last letters of which I heard came via Ceylon. I am informing Your Excellency of this in the hope that such means of communication may be stopped' (C/SS/2 vol VI). Letter writing was a significant non-violent political tool for communicating beyond Seychelles as is evident from the extensive knowledge people in the home country had about the place and experiences of exile. Indeed, for the entire duration of Pasha's exile, Egyptians were aware of his condition and agitated through demonstrations, telegrams, petitions and anti-British violence (Al-Ahram Weekly, 2000). Letters of condemnation were published in Egyptian and British newspapers and Al-Ahram publicised the fact that copies of letters were on sale at bookstores and newspaper stands in Egypt, making widely available the debates and protests that were taking place. Combined with pressure by the British community in Egypt as well as some British Members of Parliament, these eventually led to his repatriation.

Exiles challenged their condition through these letters that irritated the colonialists; not only did they have to engage in regular correspondence with the exiles, but had to address often quite mundane requests at a time when they were striving to maintain an empire. For exiles, writing became a means by which they could exercise agency in disempowering circumstances, reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, challenge the authority of the British and present a constant and uncomfortable reminder of their presence. In this way, exiles were effective at accessing multiple systems of authority and empowered to challenge the political designs of Colonial Governments.

Exiles were also fully aware of colonial authorities' anxieties should one of them fall seriously ill. The Palestinians, for example, threatened that they would hold 'the Government responsible for any ill-effects or detriment to their health' (CO 733/333/10). Correspondence from exiles to colonial authorities regarding their physical condition were an important and continuous form of resistance and attention. The British were most worried about the consequences of the death of a popular leader in exile and how this might fuel conflict, as exemplified in the discussions that took place in the House of Commons in 1922 when Pasha became seriously unwell. Concerned that his death in exile might unleash anti-colonial clashes in Egypt and damage ongoing negotiations as to its future governance, one Member of Parliament argued that, 'Zaghloul's presence in Egypt is no doubt embarrassing, but his absence is a danger. What would be the effect if he were to die in exile?' and, 'If he dies in the Seychelles in our hands it will fan into flame the feeling that is certainly prevailing in Egypt' (HC Deb 14 March 1922 vol 151 cc2009-12). Although at one level unsuccessful, letter writing and other forms of resistance were a constant challenge to a Colonial Government facing pressures to defend its policies to an increasingly divided House of Commons.

6. Conclusion

While there has been a tendency in some studies on imperial history to present a homogenised, singular and unified 'colonial project', this paper has expounded understandings of the contradictions and internal conflicts inherent within colonial rule and the exercise of colonial power. As the example of colonial policies of exile show, internal conflicts and hierarchies amongst and between various colonial authorities are reflective of a system that was inconsistent and continuously changing. By foregrounding the hitherto under acknowledged anti-colonial transimperial networks created by colonised subjects, this paper disrupts narratives that privilege those produced by colonisers and deepens understandings of the diversity, intricacy and changing nature of imperial connections.

Through this study of the compulsory relocation of political exiles and their capacity to create connections, this paper challenges assumptions about the restraining effects of containment; that it closes off ties, contacts and political activity. As a form of socio-political and spatial exclusion, exiling attempted to contain anti-colonial nationalists and discipline their supporters. However, exiles' physical displacement did not ensure their detachment from others nor wholly quash their political activities. Instead, as this paper has shown, in a particular colonial context, forms of defiance and contestation emerged to create new transimperial networks of resistance that forged connections between colonies across empire. Both homeland and place of exile were denied self-government and this shaped the establishment of new bonds and collective identities amongst colonised people that transcended national boundaries, providing an example of translocal solidarity. Exiles' desire to be active in the politics of their home countries, coupled with this forging of alliances with colonised people in their place of exile, had a 'synergetic function' in that it was 'both the result of political processes and a constitutive factor of emerging political systems' (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009: 10). In this way, the very practice of confinement opened up new spaces in which ever more extensive networks were created that paradoxically challenged the very purpose of colonial policies of exile in the first place.

By identifying a form of colonial mobility and subaltern agency much under-researched in studies of imperialism, this study contributes to understandings of space and resistance. It provides an example of resistance to colonialism not only *through space* with the forced physical movement of people from one imperial site to another but, importantly, resistance *in place* through the creation of transnational connections. In highlighting these multiple sites of anti-colonial networks of resistance that stretched across imperial space, this paper further contributes to understandings of spatial-political processes and challenges 'territorially embedded understandings of geography' (O Tuathail, 1998, p. 82), politics and resistance. Indeed, the forms of translocal resistance that emerged demonstrate the importance of moving away from place-based politics (Featherstone, 2008; Amin, 2004) yet reveal how places, in this case Seychelles, provided new spaces in which identities could be reworked and subaltern political activities could take place.

Understanding the complex and contradictory processes of colonialism, as evidenced through this exploration of exile, enables different ways of thinking about politics and resistance, spotlights the changing, contradictory and contested nature of a colonialism often conceived of as seamless and makes possible a deeper understanding of the agency of the colonised to contest colonial authority. Furthermore, although the networks, solidarities and resistance described here were produced within a particular temporal-spatial context, exiles' mobilities and agencies created lasting and significant relations and alliances. Not only do some descendants of exiles continue to live in Seychelles but exiles paved the way for the establishment of transnational networks between colonies that have endured beyond the demise of colonial rule. These continuing effects of colonial rule, compulsory dislocation and resistance are much evident in Seychelles today where the value and significance of its historical role in hosting anti-colonial exiles is increasingly recognised and valued.

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