

- 23 Steel, *Against Goliath*, p. 37, says that after much toing and froing Macdonald declined the Liberal Association's invitation. However his son doubts whether Macdonald considered returning to fight the seat, although asked to do so by local Liberals. The Conservative majority increased to 15.6%, with the Liberal in second place on 32.1%.
- 24 Watkins, *The Liberal Dilemma*, p. 70. The letter was also signed by Desmond Banks, E. F. Allison, Norman Clark, Peter Grafton and Philip Skelsey.
- 25 Michael Macdonald note to the authors, 8 October 2002.
- 26 The Liberal candidates won 6% of the votes in the three-member constituency. Macdonald polled slightly better than the other two.
- 27 Steel, *Against Goliath*, p. 37, and information provided by Michael Macdonald.
- 28 *Hampstead and Highgate Express and Hampstead Garden Suburb and Golders Green News*, 15 May 1964.
- 29 Michael Macdonald note to the authors, 8 October 2002.

LETTERS

Peter Hatton

Having done a PhD on the Colonial Office under Lewis (Loulou) Harcourt over thirty years ago, I was delighted to see Patrick Jackson's biographical article about him in issue 40. He is most illuminating on his years as his father's secretary (and manager?) and his social and political background.

However, it seems to me perverse not to consider Harcourt's contribution in office to colonial / imperial policy. I would summarise the main heads there as:

1. Amalgamating the Nigerias (1912–14).
2. Further developing Dominion status – especially at the Colonial / Commonwealth conference of 1911, and through his close relations (via the first Governor-General, (Lord) Herbert Gladstone (son of W. E.)) with the new Union of South Africa.
3. Vigorously defending the policy of coastal concentration in British Somaliland when the Tories (amendment to King's Speech, February 1914) demanded aggressive action against Muhammad Abdille Rahman ('the mad mullah' to the British press).
4. Supporting peasant proprietor export development in

colonial Africa (especially Ugandan cotton and Ghanaian cocoa); he even sacked a Governor of Kenya (then the British East African Protectorate) for sharp practice over an African land reserve.

5. As MP for Rossendale, in Lancashire (and with an ennobled ex-MP for Oldham as his number two) he was zealous in securing supplies of cotton, palm oil, rubber and chocolate for British (especially Lancashire) industries.
6. He kept a close eye on Liverpool shipping interests and when he thought Treasury actions over the silver coinage of British West Africa was threatening them he won a tussle with Lloyd George on this issue.

I could go on, but I hope that this is more than enough to suggest that Jackson's argument that Harcourt 'looked to the past and failed to come to grips with the industrial and social problems of the new century' is not the whole story.

The other section I would like to comment upon is Harcourt and foreign policy (in 1971 I published an article in *European Studies Review* entitled 'Harcourt and Solf: the Search for an Anglo-German

Understanding through Africa, 1912–14'). Harcourt remained throughout the leading Cabinet advocate of détente with Germany; he organised the Cabinet majority that led to the Haldane mission to Berlin in 1912. He was also totally dismissive of any obligations towards Russia, and challenged the phrase 'Triple Entente' whenever it appeared in Cabinet papers. As I stated in my letter in issue 30, more ministers considered resigning during the fraught Cabinet meetings of 30 July – 4 August 1914. Although Belgium was a useful pretext for backing down, I am sure the prime motive in Harcourt's case was to avoid splitting the party; once it was clear that Asquith, Grey and Churchill could not be moved, more resignations could only have led to a coalition or a minority Tory government.

Larry Iles

With reference to the special issue 39 of the *Journal of Liberal History*, it is a pity that Lord Rennard agrees so readily with Bill Rodgers' contemporary document indicting Tony Cook's SDP candidature for the Darlington by-election debacle in 1983. Both of them underestimate the impact of the media, and in particular the behaviour of Vincent Hanna, the avowedly pro-Labour, *Newsnight* interrogator. He went overboard in praising Labour's Ossie O'Brien in his reports, and gave Cook the kind of merciless battering at press conferences that even veteran candidates would have found difficult to withstand. Hanna later admitted that he had really gone for Cook, hammer and tongs.

The argument that Cook was a lightweight TV reporter is also overdone; Tyne Tees always specialised in young and telegenic presenters. A much worse fault was that on policies Cook chose to be rigorously – and rather emptily – centrist, rather than take strong stands, as O'Brien and Fallon both did.