

The First World War: and its aftermaths in the Seychelles

By Julien Durup a student of history

The Fiscal Condition

The First World War, which the British described as the Great War, is defined correctly by the French as "*La guerres mondiales*" (1914-1918). Before the start of the war the economic situation of the Seychelles was at its boom and the export of the local produce was facilitated by commercial steamers and local coasters. In 1913 the total tonnage of merchant vessels visiting Mahé was 323,287tons, a slight decrease to 1912. The nationalities of the steamers were as follows: France leading with 25; British 22; German 19; Dutch 1; Norwegian 1; Swedish 1 and America 1. There were also 5 sailing vessels.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy with coconuts as the top products, followed by cinnamon, vanilla, guano, whale oil, whale guano and rubber. The islands produced over 27 million of coconut nuts, the highest number ever produced in the colony. About 21 million nuts were used in the manufactured of copra. Coconuts were sold locally at the high rate of 55 rupees per thousand and copra at £30 per ton in Europe. Vanilla was at its lowest ebb since 1895. Only about 5 tons was exported in 1913.

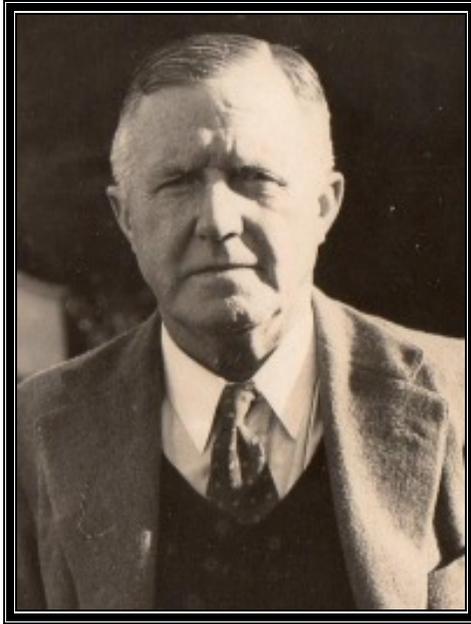
The prices of cinnamon bark and leaves oil went up and also that of clove oil. Rubber, the other new product, made a promising debut, having been introduced by in the early 1900s by the Seychelles Rubber & Coconut Company, headed by the naturalist Hans Thomasset.¹ The company had over 6000 acres of land for their rubber and coconut plantations. They also had joint venture with the 'Mahé Syndicate' to exploit guano on some coral islands of the Seychelles.

¹ Hans Paul Thomasset was born on 5th January in West Ham, Essex, England. He had his first name "Hans" from his famous godfather Hans Christian Andersen the well-known Danish prolific writer of plays. Thomasset was the first naturalist to discovered the crystallised mineral aragonite in the Sterkfontein caves in South Africa.

When the war started, the Seychelles had a military man as Governor. He was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Richard Mackey O'Brien, who was born in India. He served in South Africa and Gambia before arriving in the Seychelles on the 28th December 1912. In that same year the first motorcycle arrived in the Seychelles and the economy was still good. The German, British and French steamers were still calling at Mahé. On 11th March 1914 *SS Karl Wolfram* under Captain Von Koldt was the last German ship to stop doing its regular schedule before the war started on 28th July 1914. Governor O'Brien was a strict, racist and authoritative man but he had a few supporters and became unpopular. He abolished all extraordinary expenditure including a fund for scholarships.

Precautions were taken to safeguard the Admiralty coal depot. Before the war, coal was imported from the port of Cardiff, in Wales, by French and British ships. Some coals were put into three lighters hidden in creeks where it was expected the Germans would not be able to detect them. The buoys in the harbour had their position changed and the lighthouse not lit at night. A boat was anchored under the lee of Sainte Anne Island with rockets to be fired in the event the German entering at night time.

Henry Alfred Pare better known as Harry, of Hammersmith London, a former officer of the Royal Navy, organised a volunteer force. Look-out posts were established and precautions taken against a surprise night landing.



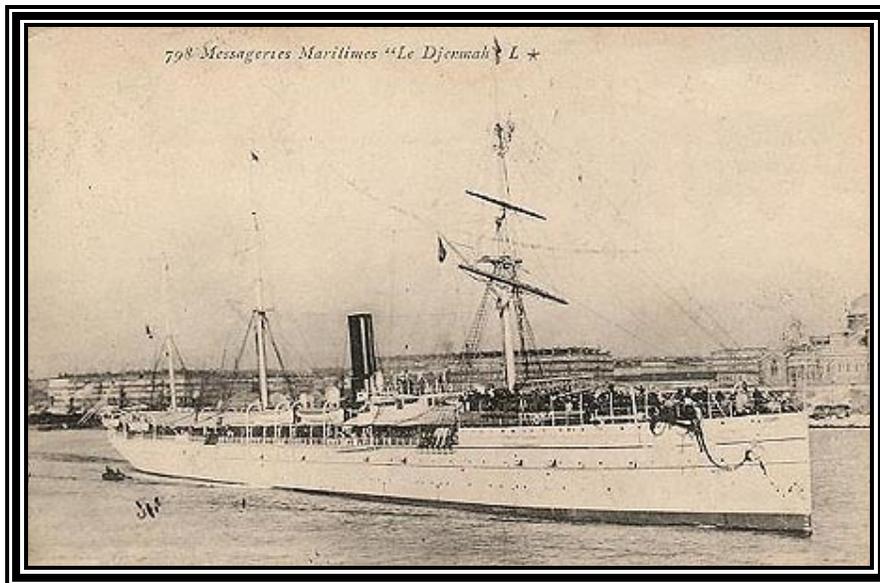
Henry Alfred Pare

The arrival of the French

On 30th November 1914, relief came to Mahé with the arrival of the first group of 98 French officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (N.C.Os), of the French colonial army. The officers arrived on the *SS Melbourne*, a former troop carrier in the French China campaign. Later, many more troops visited the Seychelles en route to Madagascar. One of the French officers, Major Pierre Antoine Ernest de Coulhac Mazerieux later settled definitively in the Seychelles and became a prominent figure. Little is known about his services in the French armed forces, but his time in the Seychelles was very interesting.² Major Mazerieux served in Madagascar and later married in the Seychelles on 19th August 1924 to Marie Eva Doger de Speville. As an ardent supporter of General Charles de Gaulle, the British Governor of Seychelles allowed him to serve in the Seychelles Contingent of the Royal Pioneer Corps in the Second World War with the same rank. He was later rewarded in 1953 by the Queen of England with the title of OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire).

² The Honourable Major Ernest de Coulhac Mazerieux OBE., was elected President of RSPCA Branch in 1960. He was also President of the Tobruk Club (Ex-Servicemen's Club), and was a member of many committees and Boards, which controlled the District Councils in the Colony, He was an Elected Member of the Seychelles Legislative Council in 1954 and Member of the Executive Council since 1957, He was also the Chairman of the Discharged Pioneers' Aid Society, a Member of the Agricultural Board and a Member of the Local Government Board, he died in 1962. Source: James R Mancham: Seychelles Personalities of Yesterday, 2006: pp.41-42

The French senior military officers who arrived on the *Melbourne* stayed in the Seychelles for a fortnight. They were welcomed by the people, and Governor O'Brien as the *noblesse oblige*, took charge of the most senior officers at Government House. The rest of the officers were taken care of by some elite members of the population and a few were lodged at the Carnegie Hall. They all later assembled on Gordon Square in a semi march-past and were inspected by O'Brien who addressed them. He said that the people were very pleased with their visit. Before they left, the French officers donated R.2,400 to a Trust selected to sick and wounded British servicemen. In a reception held on the 12th December 1914, the French bid their farewell and embarked the next day on the *SS Djemnah* for Madagascar.



SS Djemnah

Their presence, two weeks of lavish hospitality and joyfulness established more than an *Entente Cordiale*. The Governor later wrote that the visit has given much pleasure to the colony, and left the people strong in their sympathy for France. It seems that their presence also have influenced a few young Seychellois to voluntarily join French armed forces. A few left for France, enlisted in the army and died in the trenches. Little research has been done about them.

Religious Situation.

The two main religious denominations in the Seychelles at that time were the dominant Church of Rome and the Church of England. The Church of Rome was first introduced in 1771 under the Congregation of the Mission (the Lazarists), from Ile de France (Mauritius). The first priest left a year later with the passage of Jean-François de La Pérouse, a famous French sea captain. After a long absence, the Roman Catholic returned in 1851 and established permanently under the Capuchin of the Piedmont-Sardinia of the Italian Duchy of Savoy.³ With the Treaty of Turin of 24th March 1860 France annexed Savoy on 14th June 1860, and on 8th January 1863 the Seychelles Mission was transferred under the French Capuchin of the Savoy. It remained so until after the First World War when the Swiss Capuchin took over. The Church of England arrived in the Seychelles in 1832.

At the beginning of 1914, the Roman Catholic Church had nearly 15 Friars for their parishes throughout the Seychelles, and also Marists teaching brothers of different nationalities for their schools. When the Great War started the Savoyard Capuchin Friars in the Seychelles was under Bishop Clark,⁴ the first and last Englishman to occupy that post. Bishop Hudrisier,⁵ Clark's predecessor a man of long military experience in Afghanistan (and a friend of Sir Pierre Louis Napoleon Cavagnari the man that negotiated and signed the Treaty of Gandamak) gave the impression that Clark's appointment was lobbied by the British Administration. Most of the young French Friars and Marist Brothers were called for the defence of their motherland. They left the Seychelles to join the army and two of the brothers died during the battle. Marie Thoetists (Alix Croset) died in the Battle of the Somme on 8 December 1914 and Ulpian Robert (Jean Baptiste Maurin), on 29 January 1916.

³ The Duchy of Savoy was annexed by France in 1792 and it was returned in 1815 to the Italian

⁴ Thomas Edward Clark born in Hackney, London in 1856, Converted to Catholicism. He studied in London and at the St Joseph's Jesuit College Turnhout, Antwerp in Belgium. He joined the Capuchin noviciate in Paris and Le Mans on 19 October 1874. He later went to study in Ireland where he ordained priest in Cork in 1882 a year later he was sent to the Seychelles where he was known as Father Bernadin. He died in 1915 at Mahé in the Seychelles.

⁵ Marc (Michel) Hudrisier, Bishop of Port-Victoria, 1892-1910. Born at Faverges, Haute-Savoie. Ordained priest at Annecy, 1873, served in the Seychelles, 1875-76: transferred to Lahore; chaplain to British troops during Afghanistan campaign, 1878-1880. Rector of Saint Thomas College in Punjab, 1881; Administrator, Diocese of Lahore, 1886; In 1890 named Titular Bishop of Theos and Apostolic Vicar of Seychelles in 1904. He suffered a stroke in August 1909 and returned to France and died at 62 years on 6th January 1910. Source: William McAteer, *Hard Times in Paradise* 2000: p 230. .

Very few of the Friars who took part in the war were allowed to return back to the Seychelles.

The schools of the two religious denominations suffered to lack of teachers, but the Roman Catholic was the worst affected. From 1910 to 1915, Bishop Clark faced an internal jealousy with the French Savoyards who resented him. He was under immense pressure; worst still he could not get any replacement for those Friars who had left for the frontline. As a sick man this aggravated his health and he sought refuge with a Protestant family on Cerf Island where he became gravely ill. He was transported to Mahé where he died after a complicated surgery. He had refused to be interred in the Roman Catholic Cemetery (reserved uniquely for the clergy), and was buried in local cemetery at Mont Fleuri according to his last wishes.

With the demise of Bishop Clark the internal animosity in the congregation came to an end. However, the new Bishop Lachavanne⁶ inherited the same problem of having no replacement. Neither church could spare a chaplain to accompany the Seychelles Carrier Corps to East Africa. Even though Friar Jérémie⁷ of the Roman Catholic volunteered to go, Bishop Lachavanne prevented him from going. The first Seychelles contingent left in December 1916 without a chaplain, and no chaplain recruited for the second party who left on in February 1917.

The menace and the consequences of War

Even though the First World War started on 28th July 1914 when the Austro-Hungarians fired their first shots, it was on the 4th August that Britain declared war against Germany. The war ended on 11th November 1918. However, the news of its outbreak became known throughout Mahé and its neighbouring islands of Praslin and La Digue at the mid-August. Because of lack of maritime liaison it was months later when those on the outlying islands

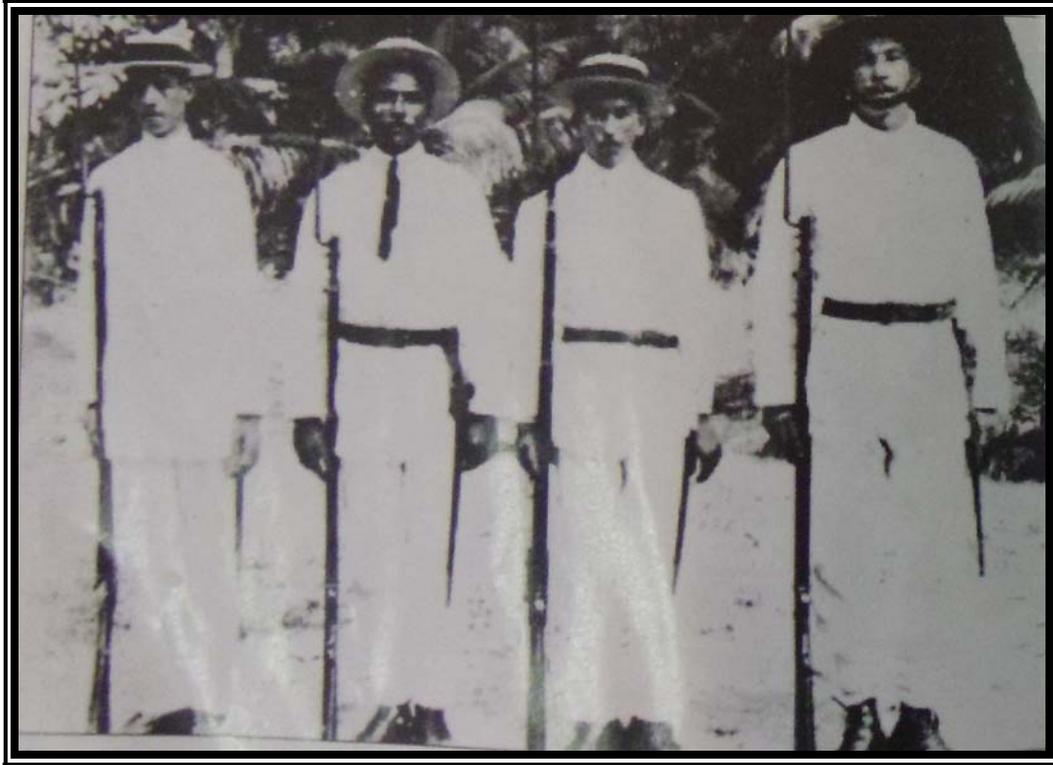
⁶ Bishop Jean Damascène (Georges) Lachavanne was born in Vovray-en-Bornes in Haute-Savoie, on 28th November in 1849. He entered the capuchin convent in 1866 and arrived in the Seychelles in 1879 he was Vicar General and appointed Bishop on 36 April 1916. Consecrated Bishop at Diego-Suarez, Madagascar on the 5th November of the same year. He died on 20th July 1920 after 40 years in the Seychelles.

⁷ Father Jérémie (Maurice) Luisier born at Saint Maurice-en-Valais, Switzerland on 25th July 1876. He entered the capuchin convent in 1898 and was ordained priest on 10th July 1903. He arrived in the Seychelles in 1905 and died a Port-Victoria on 1st April 1956.

were finally informed of the conflict. On Mahé, the capital, life was very quiet. Some merchants closed their shops very early and in general people were afraid of the possibility of the German invasion. In contrast, in the South of the island there was more than panic. When people thought that the German landing was eminent, they run into the mountains. The shops were closed and fishermen stayed ashore. This caused night looters to steal tortoises, chickens, pigs and any food stuff such as coconuts, for them to survive the incoming *letandir* (from the French word *le temps dur* 'time of hardship').

In August 1914 false rumours of an incoming German man-of-war came from South Mahé. One of the sentries mistook a cloud like a *fata morgana* (an unusual form of mirage), on the horizon off Port Glaud, for an enemy ship. Dr John Thomas Bradley, the Justice of Peace for that region, sent an urgent message to the Governor in town informing him about the incoming German ship was thought to be sailing south. Bradley was very instrumental in raising money for the Red Cross Fund. By the end of 1915, the sum of £2,000, a local contribution, was sent to England. He later dispatched another urgent message, this time at night, conveyed by a policeman on a bicycle, who left Anse Royale at 2100 hrs and arrived at Government House at 0230 hrs. The policeman was very quick but not as fast as the Persian messengers.⁸ The Governor was dragged out of his bed and this upset him. Bradley later sent more messages and one them was to clarify the news that the *SMS Königsberg* of the Imperial German had not been sighted. The Governor later warned Bradley that his messages had no purpose and that he was the instigator of these "Ignorant Excitements" and not to upset the people with unnecessary alarm.

⁸ One Greek historian recorded that: "*Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian messengers...these men will not be hindered from accomplishing at their best speed the distance which they have to go, either by snow, or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night.*"



Members of the defence forces in Anse Royale 1915: Mondon, Naidoo, Purcel and Morel

Photo Dr Thomas Bradley

From Denise Johnstone's book "The Way we Were"

However, the authorities took the possible German raid seriously when the cable connection with Zanzibar and Mauritius was cut off as soon as the war was declared. The connection was restored with Mauritius in November 1914, soon after the Admiralty decided hurriedly built the first Wireless Station at Beau Vallon. They also knew that the famous German commerce raider (the light cruiser), *SMS Emden*, was in the Indian Ocean. The *Emden* had already caused panic among the British and allied shipping in the Indian Ocean, known at that time as the "British Lake" because of the dominated British presence. In October 1914, the *Emden* after taking coal from the *SS Buresk*⁹ near Nicobar Islands,

⁹ *SS Buresk* was a 4,3337-ton steamship built in 1914 by Richardson Duck and Company, Thornaby-on-Tees for Burdick and Cook, London. She was captured by the *SMS Emden* while on her way to Hong Kong with a cargo of coal. She was put under the command of Lieutenant Commander R Klopper and used as a prison ship and collier. She was sunk by HMS Sydney near Cocos Islands.

visited Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, and Walter Hugh Cummins the manager gave the Germans fresh fruits, vegetables including fish, a live pig and water. In return the German gave them wine, whisky, brandy and cigars. During their brief and friendly sojourn the Germans kept Cummins in deliberate ignorance about the war, even though Cummins was suspicious. They assisted the islanders in repairing the island's only motor boat. Soon after the German left Diego Garcia it is said that *HMS Hampshire* and the British Cruiser *Empress of Russia* visited the Diego Garcia in peruse of the *Emden*. According to a recent interesting research done by Nigel Wenban-Smith, a former BIOT Commissioner, the two British Naval ships according to their logbooks never visited Diego Garcia, during October or early November, although *HMS Hampshire* (who was en route to the Colombo from the Maldives), sighted Peros Banos. And *Empress of Russia* who was heading for Colombo visited Diego Garcia late in the afternoon on 20 November, anchored overnight and left the next day for Colombo¹⁰. The strange episode had been written inaccurately in many books and Cummins had been unjustly presented as a fool. In 1913, Cummins predicted the First World War and was very distrustful of the German visit Diego Garcia.

The *Emden*, under Captain Von Müller,¹¹ was put out of service during the Battle of Cocos ((in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands)), against the Australia cruiser *HMAS Sydney*, under Captain Glossop.¹²

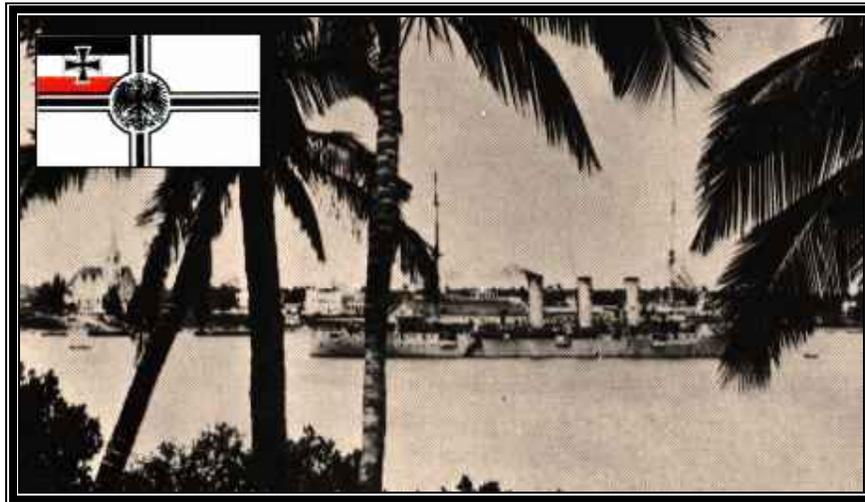
The news of *Königsberg* (the faster and more powerful cruiser in the Indian Ocean, which was sent to raid French and British maritime traffic), in Aldabra came very late to Mahé. After a brief encounter with a coal-transport vessel, she had taken retreat at Aldabra at the end of August 1914. Not knowing that the war had started, the manager took a pirogue with

¹⁰ Nigel Weban-Smith unpublished document.

¹¹ Captain Karl Friedrich Max Von Müller June 16, 1783-March 11, 1923. While on the *Emden* he took part in the Second Chinese Revolution. Later he bombarded the British oils tanks in the Port of Madras and took part in the Battle of Madras. After his capture on Cocos Islands he was taken to Malta and then to England where he was interned at the prisoner of war camps for German officers in the Midlands. In 1917 he led an abortive escape. As he was suffering from malaria he was sent on a humanitarian grounds for treatment in the Netherlands. In late 1918 he was repatriated to Germany where he was awarded the Blue Max (Pour le Mérite). After his retirement in 1919 he became a politician on the platform of the German National People's Party and was elected to the state parliament of Branschweis. He died suddenly on 11th March 1923.

¹² Captain John Colling Taswell Glossop 1871-1934 was an English-born naval officer best known for commanding the Australian Cruiser *Sydney* during the single-ship Battle of Cocos on 9th November 1914 against the *Emden*.

a few men and sailed out to board the *Königsberg*. Arriving nearby, a polite German officer told them in very good French “*n’approcher pas ici parce qu’il y a la variole à bord*”. They returned ashore immediately and later informed the authorities at Mahé the presence the *Königsberg*, through a visiting local schooner. Believing *Königsberg* was hiding in in the lagoon of Aldabra, the authorities sent a wireless message to British naval ships in the region.



SS *Königsberg* in Dar es Salam

The message was received by *Sydney*, also by *Königsberg* who apparently had a copy of the British Naval Code. When the *Sydney* arrived at Aldabra, the *Königsberg* had already left and destroyed the *HMS Pagusus* in the Battle of Zanzibar. She later sailed for Tanganyika and took her final refuge in the Rufudji River at the beginning of September 1914. *Königsberg* made very few raids in the Indian Ocean because of the coal shortages.

Meanwhile at Mahé, the Defence Committee was well in place. They formed the Emergency Citizens’ Corps on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. The corps was headed by the respective Justice of Peace and members of the small rifle club, members of the Civil Service, and members of public. They were all sworn in as special constables and the Police were also trained in firearms. The Committee set up a price control and recommended the growing of more local produce like cassava, maize and sweet potatoes. The island had still the opportunity to make money but the situation started to change in 1916 when the cargo ships increased their price and offered less space for cargo. This was followed a big drop in the local produce, as well as guano. The copra exporters did not want to invest their money in buying this once precious commodity. The copra industry nearly came to an end and the landowners on Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and later the lessees of the outlying islands, decided to cut their expenditures by dismissing labourers. As a result, unemployment became a very serious problem.

Banking activity also succumbed with the closure of the branch of the Mauritius Commercial Bank¹³ on the 31st January 1916 after only 5 years in operation. That bank was created in Mauritius in 1838, partly from compensation money received by former slavers after the emancipation of the slaves by the British. The next profitable business to go was the St Abbs Whaling Company on Sainte Anne Island, which was closed in early 1916. That Norwegian Company established itself in 1913 and had two factories, one for oil and the other for whale guano. They employed Norwegian and Seychellois personnel. In 1915 they exported whale oil to the value of R103,636 and R11,292 for whale guano.

The cost of living had doubled; the price of rice rose from 7 cents to 14 cents. The labourers who were still in employment were getting 33 cents a day yet had to find 2-3 Rupees a month for their rents. The landowners could still sell some of their coconuts and the merchants raised their prices. For the poor there was no way out of hunger and poverty; even as unemployed they had to pay their taxes (local rates). To survive they turned to stealing, mostly coconuts for them to eat and make oil for cooking and other comestible crops. Nothing was free any more, even breadfruits had its value for the first time. The islands that produced guano had shut down and starvation was biting the poor community. However, some landowners were still producing *baka*¹⁴ and *kalou*¹⁵ for the poor to drink, and a few paid their labourers with *bon* (bond), with could be used at some specific shops. Some *bon* was valid only at the landowners' "*lakanbiz*"¹⁶ (from the French word *la cambuse*), Larceny became rife and the prison was full of hungry inmates, but without troublemakers.

To make the matters worse, Governor O'Brien, in an effort to solve this embarrassing situation, set up a committee who recommended flogging and caning as an incentive for them to pay rates. The situation was so alarming, with the increasing number of destitute, so to discourage begging, the Government moved them from Mahé, Praslin and La Digue to the Leper Colony of Curieuse Island, thus spreading the risk of leprosy.

Before he went on leave Governor O'Brien decided to tax the poor instead of raising taxes on the landowners. He raised the *baka* Tax up to R250 per *arpent* per year on sugar-cane cultivation, which came into operation on 1st June 1916. Sugar cane was grown solely for the

¹³ Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) founded in 1838 is the longest banking institution of Mauritius and also the oldest banking institution south of the Sahara and one of the oldest banks of the Commonwealth to have preserved its original name.

¹⁴ *Baka* sugar cane juice from the Hindi word *bakhar*

¹⁵ *Kalou* is the juice from the coconut tree is from the Telegu word meaning toddy.

¹⁶ Originally from the Dutch word *Kombuis*, In (argot) slang, a disreputable cabaret

purpose of making *baka*, and this along with *frangorin*,¹⁷ was the favourite beverages of the poor. Then the landowners simple increased their price of their "*lanmok*"¹⁸ *baka* for them to pay the tax.

There was a lot of rain in 1915. During July-August the Seychelles was severely affected by dengue fever, cellulitis, *solpis* "French *chaude-pisse*" (venereal diseases), jaundice and hookworms (*Ankylostomiasis*). In that same year the population was 12,435 males and 12, 000 females. The number of court cases had doubled from 1914. In 1915, 682 men and 146 women were convicted, of which 569 men and 129 women (the poorest members of the community), were jailed in the small overcrowded prison for not paying their rates and the costs of the court.

A French Legionnaire in the first voluntary group.

Just after the war, Britain started her campaigned to recruit men for the war effort with advertising banners requested them to join the Army. Copies of the printed posters were sent to all the Dominions and colonies including the Seychelles. At that time the British monarch did not go into battle (the last one to go in a battle was George II presumably because he was a German). The slogan in one of the posters stated: "*Britain needs you at once... and God Save the King*". By the time those posters arrived, many Seychellois had already died in France.

A few European volunteers left the Seychelles for East Africa to join the British forces against the German. Some Franco-Seychellois, in their love for France left early to join the French forces. The first to go to East Africa was a Frenchman, Philibert Olivier Julefy Ducrotoy,¹⁹ an army deserter of the Foreign Legion hiding at Mahé.

¹⁷ Frangorin a fermented juice made from different types of edible fruits it is now called "lapire" from the French word (Argot) *La purée* meaning cider.

¹⁸ *Lanmok* is from the French word "moque" a drinking and measuring mug. At that time there were two types used by the poor. *Lanmok kapstan* made out of round Capstan cigarette (of the British Imperial Tobacco) tin and *lanmok kafoul*. Kafoul is the Swahili word for coconut shell. Hence the saying "*bez en lanmok*" let's have a drink, is from Gallo *beirr unn moq*.

¹⁹ The story of Philibert Ducrotoy came from the book "*Beautiful Isles, Beautiful People*" of Athalie Ducroty an English Lady who had married René Ducroctoy the grandson of Philibert. Both have given us the permission to quote from the book and to reproduce the photo of Philibert.



Philibert Olivier Julefy Ducrotoy in 1921

Photo: Courtesy René and Athalie Ducrotoy

Ducrotoy's dramatic adventure could easily be turned into a very good film. He was born on 13th August 1866 in the village of Vignacourt (the land of vineyards), in the Somme, and left home at 16 years old after serious encounter with his father-in-law. He left home at night and headed for Marseilles. While there, he joined the Foreign Legion and was sent to Sidi-bel-Abbas in Algeria for training. After completing his survival test in the Sahara the world's hottest desert, he decided to have the following tattoos on his body: "*Marche ou Crève*" (march or die), the unofficial motto of the Foreign Legion and "*Enfant du malheure*" (a lad of misfortune). He was later selected to go to Indo-China. En route the troopship stopover at Mauritius, where he and a few of his compatriots decided to stowaway. He later boarded a schooner and sailed to the Seychelles, where he married three years later a on 24th

December 1891 to Julia Edmond, a local girl. He soon set up with his father-in-law a profitable “*kales*”²⁰ (coach), “*saret*” (cart), and “*forzron*” blacksmith businesses.

As soon as the news of the starting of the Great War reaches Mahé, the French Consul started his recruitment campaign amongst the Franco/Seychellois family and managed to convince a few young men to join the French armed forces. He went on to see Ducrotoy and reminded him that as a fugitive he would one day be shot. In a diplomatic way, he persuaded Ducrotoy to go to East Africa and enrol in the British Army then he will be spared from the death penalty. Ducrotoy took the first available ship and sailed on 30th January 1915 on SS *Palamcotta*²¹ to Mombasa. He enrolled 11th February of the same year with the East African Mounted Rifles Corps, a regiment reserved exclusively for white people. On 13th May 1915, during the night, while engaging with the enemy his horse was shot by the German. The bullet went through the horse, causing a severe wound in his ankle, and he was trapped beneath his dead horse. Many lions came by and sniffed the air and walked on, refusing to eat “*l’enfant du malheure*” in preference to the many dead horses in the vicinity. He was located the next morning and taken to the hospital. After his convalescence, Ducrotoy stayed at the hospital and was employed as an excellent “horse doctor” in the East African Medical Corps, until he was discharged with a small pension for life on 6th December 1915. As a “horse doctor” he was soon employed by Lord George Charles Colville (a very influence personality) to take charge of his large horse stables. He soon fell in love with the place and wanted to stay permanently in Kenya. He wrote to his wife in the Seychelles to pack all his tools and come to Kenya with her nine children and a domestic servant. When the steamer arrived (it was still during the war) Lady Cynthia Colville went with him to Mombasa to welcome his big family. At the customs office, in a rage, Ducrotoy threw a jar of coffee into the face of the Custom Officer. Lady Colville had to plea for liniency otherwise he would have been incarcerated. Later Ducrotoy became a farmer and was producing meat

²⁰ Interestingly “*Kales*” a four wheels carriage is from the French word *calèche* and so is the word coach (coche). The word “*saret*” meaning cart is also from the French word *cart* or *chariot*

²¹ *SS Palamcotta* was built in Glasgow in 1890 as passenger/cargo ship for the British India Steam Navigation Company. Used as a hospital ship during the First World War and sold for scrapping in 1920.

and very good quality sausages and also large quantity illicit wine and beer. In 1919 he was arrested and charge for making illegal liquor. In court he pleaded not guilty and was asked by the court to give details of the contents found in many barrels from his house, his reply was simple “vinegar your honour” and the Crown laboratory report concurred. Before dismissing the case, the Judge asked him why do you make so much vinegar and he replied swiftly “*I preserve meat in vinegar, cabbage, fruits, eggs, everything.... I have a large family to support*”.

As soon as he was freed, he almost lost his temper by shouting “*C’est pas tout. Je veux le contenant et le contenu*” (It is not finished. I want the container and the contents). The police returned all his barrels to his house on the same day where he added sugar to it. A few days later he had a grand party with all his friends. After the Great War, he received the two following medals from the British: Victory Medal, 1914-1915 Star and 1914-1920 British War Medal. Ducrotoy kept in touch with his family in France but he never went back to visit. He died in Kenya in 1924.

Second Voluntary Recruitments

Meanwhile, in early 1916, during the East African campaign against Germany, the intelligent Lieutenant-General Jan Smuts²² took command of the allied forces. In September they captured Dar-es-Salam, at month later Smuts cabled the Seychelles Governor requesting for 5.000 labourers and porters. This was a welcome opportunity for the authorities in the Seychelles to get rid of about five hundred unemployed men, and to empty their jail from poor people who could not find money to their rates, and also those who had been jailed stealing coconuts for them to eat. During the recruitment, in a telegram to the Secretary of State, Governor O’Brien pointed out: “*I think that their*

²² Jan Christiaan Smuts, 24 May 1870-11 September 1950. He was a prominent South African and British Commonwealth statesmen, military leader and philosopher. One of his greatest international accomplishments was the establishment of the League of Nations, in which his designed was implemented. He later urged the formation of a new international organisation for peace: the UN. Smuts wrote the preamble to the United Nations Charter, and was the only person to sign the charters of both the League of Nations and the UN. He sought to redefine the relationship between the United Kingdom and her colonies, helping to establish the British Commonwealth, as it was known at the time. However, later he was asked indirectly to abide by his own principle, when the General Assembly in 1946 requested the Smuts government to take measures to bring the treatment of Indians in South Africa into line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.¹

departure will be an excellent thing for the country, the rest will be able to find work locally". Having known that some has criminal records, he further added they will need some lessons of discipline.

More than 1,000 men volunteered to join the "Seychelles Carrier Corps" which was going to be under the command of "King's African Rifles" (KAR). KAR started the War with 21 small companies and expended up to the same size as the British and Indian Army Imperial Army. Nearly a thousand were enlisted and they later sailed to the island of Kilwa in East Africa in two different ships to make the total amalgamated Carrier Corps to 400,000 porters. As an inducement, the new recruits were given two months' advance pay.

Many failed their medical test and some were rejected because of their criminal records. The first contingent of 697 including 27 overseers and two local newly appointed commissioned officers sailed on 19th December 1916 aboard the *SS Berwick Castle*²³ for the island of Kilwa Kisiwani off the coast of Tanzania. Just before they left, many became sick, affected by the spread of venereal disease, yet they left without treatment.

The second party left on the 28th February 1917 in the *SS Tabora*²⁴ under Corporal Charles Cosgrov. For the first contingent, C. Tomkinson, a military captain a racist from the headquarters of East African Command, accompanied them to East Africa. Before they left, Tomkinson was surprised to see several white men amongst the labourers and that some NCOs were dark-skinned. He was not in favour of whites messing with blacks. He could not understand why two black men had been given responsibilities; Charles Lubin, who was chosen as an overseer, and Salan Malbrook, selected as a carriage examiner. Malbrook died on 6th May 1917 in East Africa while Lubin survived the war.

The first contingent arrived at its destination on Christmas Eve and 16 days later they suffered their first casualty when Cupidon Labiche died on the 9th January 1917. He was only

²³ *SS Berwick Castle* was built by William Beardmore and company in Glasgow in 1902 for the Union Castle Line. Troop carrier during the war. Sold in 1919 to Andora SADI Construzione Ed Impresse Navali, Genoa and scrapped in 1925.

²⁴ *SS Tabora* not to be confused with the German hospital ship of the same name which in 1912 and was sunk 23rd March 1916 in Dar-es-Salaam Harbour by two British warships.

18 years of age, and one of the youngest members who died of dysentery. That disease, along with malaria, spread rapidly and by 26th February over 20 had perished. However, the authorities kept the news to themselves to avoid discouragement amongst the second contingent who was still in the Seychelles. Nor did they wish to discourage any prospect in additional recruitment.

Before they left, their scale of rations was discussed and agreed to. However, the agreement was completely ignored by the East African Command. This later made them prone to vitamin deficiency diseases that had been eliminated in the Seychelles. The only food that was supplied from the Seychelles was *larou saret*²⁵ a flat, large, round and hard biscuit also known as *biskui sale* or *gros biscuit*. The first contingent had had their last *larou saret* with their morning tea on the day they reached their destination. On the way they received mostly poor quality rice and dhal curry, contrary to the agreed menu of rice, meat and vegetables. Arriving at their destination, they were given bad meat and biltong made from different types of meat, with dates given as replacements, a very strange diet for Seychellois. Arriving at the island of Kilwa Kisiwani, they split into two groups. The first group were employed as dockworkers and the second group carried the cargoes up to the front.

The second contingent encountered more deprivation with their *carte du jour* on the *Tabora* where a special Indian cook fed them with all the way to Zanzibar with inferior white rice and dhal curry. At arrival, most of them were sick with diarrhoea. From Zanzibar they boarded another ship direct to Dar-es-Salam where most of them arrived ill on 15th March 1917. At Kilwa, after so many deaths and their poor health, the East African Command decided to repatriate the first group of 28 mainly supervisors via Bombay, of which the following died and were buried in the Kirkee War Memorial in Maharashtra, India: Lieutenant François Louis Joseph Lemarchand, Joseph Morgan and Caporal E Larne, the latter is presumably a typing error as “Larne” is not a Seychellois patronymic, it could have been “Larue”. Later in March a doctor from South Africa visited the Seychellois camp in Kilwa recommended their immediate repatriation to the Seychelles. On 7th April,

²⁵ From the French “*route de charrette*” a type of flat, large and round cake originated from Brittany.

Lieutenant France Lemarchand and the doctor inspected the Seychelles contingent. They identified that only 295 men was fit to travel, 28 were recommended to be transported in hospital ship. They found that 11 were on their death beds and considered too ill to be transported. Most were put on board the *SS Palamcotta* for Mombasa with the hope that their health will improve, yet en route many died.

In early May the East African Command decided to repatriate (after the major loss) the entire remaining Seychellois contingent. The news came to Mahé in a cable signed by Smuts on 7th May 1917. The first group of 365 men boarded the hospital ship *Guildford Castle*²⁶ in Mombasa. In early April the second group of over 125 left Mombasa on *SS Burunga*²⁷ another hospital. Two Seychellois officers and some NCOs stayed behind and they were later repatriated via Bombay where a few died.

Before the first group arrived the Seychelles, they had ample time to build more accommodation on the quarantine station on Long Island. The first group to arrive (after many had died on the way), at Long Island was *dan lanbo* (in rags), infected with lice and very dirty, with open abscesses on their legs and feet. It was as if they had not receive any sort of treatment on board the hospital ship. After they were examined by Dr Joseph Addison only about thirty five were healthy enough to work. Addison found out that 70 were suffering from beri-beri, many had dysentery and malaria, out of which 60 were urgent cases. Many died on Long Island during the quarantine period. After the quarantine period was over many were allowed to go home, and the sick were transferred to the Mont Fleuri Hospital. Addison took charge of the quarantine station along with a Scottish nurse Miss

²⁶ *SS Guildford Castle* built by Barclay Curle and Company in Glasgow in 1911 as a passenger vessel for the Union Castle Line, served as a hospital ship during the war wrecked on 31st May 1933 near Oste Riff, in the river Elbe after a collision with the Blue Funnel ship the *SS Stentor*.

²⁷ *SS Burunga* was a former German Steamer named *Sumatra* built in 1913 at Flensburg, Germany. Seized in Sydney Australia when the war started and was renamed *Burunga* after a small aboriginal community in the in Northern Australia. She was torpedoed by a German submarine on 15th July 1918 about 150 miles from Bishop Rock (the world's smallest island) the westernmost tip of the Isles of Scilly in Cornwall.

Margaret Halkett who had previously worked in London and in the “Boer concentrations Camps”.²⁸

Sometime after his return from leave from England on 21st March 1917, Governor O’Brien decided to set up a board of inquiry to determine why over 41% of the contingent lost their lives mostly through diseases. His committee (which was according to him selected from “independent-minded gentlemen”), did not inquire fully what had happened made a biased report putting most of the blame on the Seychellois themselves. Another full-scale inquiry was conducted by Dr Pike the Surgeon-General on behalf of the Army General Command. Pike concluded almost on the same line but also added that the recruitment examination was entirely wrong. As for the South African Military, they put all the blame on the Seychelles authority and the volunteers. For them the tragedy could have been avoided if all the NCOs were European, and because they reminded the Seychelles authority that Lieutenant-General Smuts had specifically asked for the Officers and NCOs be European.

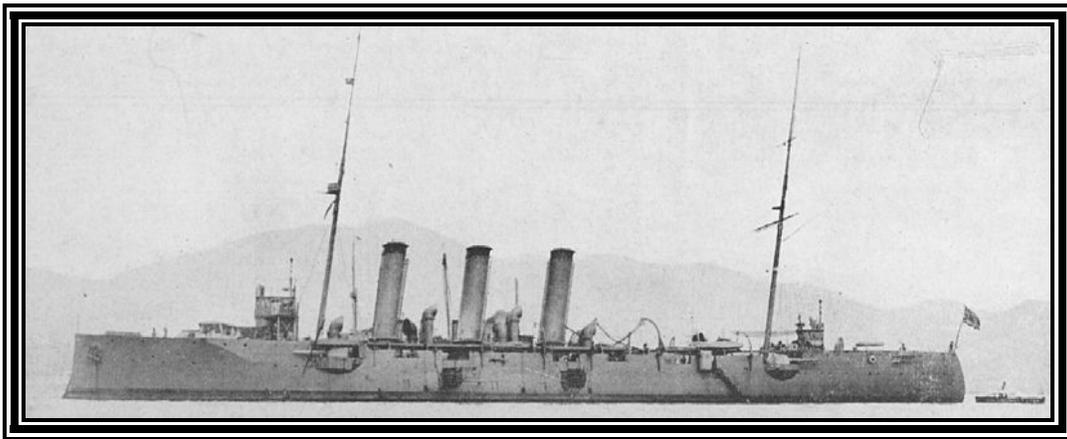
Many of those who survived were unfit to work. Years later (along with the wives and parents of those who died), found it very hard to claim compensation from the British. Britain were very selective in giving the promised compensation, (the colour of their skin was of paramount important). For them a poor black could sustained poverty while a white man could not. For example Lieutenant Lemarchand’s wife was awarded an annual pension of £75 with additional allowances for the maintenance and for the education of his four children. None of the black spouses in that category were awarded pension. Their graves in the Mont Fleuri give a picture of discrimination they had to face even after being interred. All their graves are unmarked and the British expected their families to mount a proper tombstone. It was ten years after the conflict, that the War Graves Commission provided 46 simple granite unmarked headstones for those who died shortly after arriving in the Seychelles. Only two families afforded the construction of a proper tombstone with an epitaph on behalf the following love ones; Rodolphe Hoareau of La Digue who died on 23rd June 1917 and Charly Laveilleuse who died 20th May 1917. Later the rich of family

²⁸ The “Concentrations Camps” in South Africa known also as the “war against women” was set up by the British to deprive Boer families assisting their menfolk.

Lemarchand (whose wife was an Hodoul), erected a memorial stone at Mahé, even though Lemarchand was buried in Kirkee War Cemetery, Maharashtra, India.

Visit from the Land of the Rising Sun.

With Anglo-Japanese alliance, the Japanese Navy was patrolling the waters out of the Straits of Malacca to oust German ships. They later helped the British to defeat the mutiny of the Indian troops in Singapore who had set free 300 German prisoners. Later on the 18th December 1916 the British Admiralty made another request to the Japanese, this time for naval assistance in escorting troop transports and anti-submarine operations to the Indian Ocean and Europe. Two cruisers of Japanese Imperial Navy the *Tsushima* and *Niitaka*, from their base in Singapore, escorted British ships to Cape Town, South Africa by stopping in Mauritius. They made a surprise visit to the Seychelles and arrived at Mahé on the 11th April 1917, leaving three days later. The *Tsushima* was under Captain Komatsu and *Niitaka* commanded by Captain Koreshige Inuzuka.



The cruiser *Niitaka* the sister ship of the *Tsushima*

Later two Special Japanese Squadrons sailed for Europe none of their ships stopped at Mahé.

Eight destroyers arrived in Malta on 13th April 1917, making the total of 17 destroyers and other ships in the two Squadrons under Rear-Admiral Kozo Sato²⁹.

The Second Special Squadron carried out escort duties for troop transports and anti-submarine operations. The Japanese squadron made a total of 348 escort sorties from Malta, escorting 788 ships containing around 700,000 soldiers, thus contributing greatly to the war effort. A further 7,075 people were rescued from damaged and sinking ships. In return for this assistance, Great Britain recognised Japan's territorial gains including all former German Pacific colonies north of the equator.

Even though Japan³⁰ was in an alliance with the Entente Powers, and a British ally since 1902, during their visit to the Seychelles, the British authorities considered them as spies. During their stay the Japanese befriended Singow Oashi a local Japanese entrepreneur who was a soap maker and a well-known photographer. They also visited most of the small mercantile businesses in town. In 1916 a search was made at Mahé for German partisans who might be spying. They arrested a few German sailors who arrived on a Norwegian boat. One of them was already in love with a local girl of respectable family. Those sailors were later put on parole and later sent by boat to Bombay. They found another resident German, a sister of the Saint Joseph of Cluny, and she was allowed to stay. When they inquired about Jurgen Henrich Schmidt, a well-known German from Kries in southern Schleswing, who had settled and married at Mahé to Louise Alfrida Dargent and had four children, they found out that the family had left. However, according to the authorities on Mahé the visiting Japanese were spying on the commercial activities³¹.

²⁹ Sato was born on 15th May 1871 and died on 23rd March 1948, a graduate of the imperial Japanese Naval Academy in 1896. Promoted to lieutenant in 1894. Military Attaché in London in 1903 and served in the Russo-Japanese War. Promoted to Rear-Admiral on 1st December 1916. Assigned to command two squadrons to Malta. On his flagship the *Akashi* he patrolled the eastern Mediterranean from Alexandria, Marseilles, Taranto against German and Austro-Hungarian Navy. He returned home and became Vice-Admiral and died in 1948.

³⁰ The British requested the Japanese assistance on 7th August 1914 and the Japanese declared war on Germany on 23rd August 1914.

³¹ C/W/4 Seychelles National Archives.

In his flagship the Akashi Sato patrolled the eastern Mediterranean from Alexandria, Marseilles, Taranto against German and Austro-Hungarian Navy. He returned home and became Vice-Admiral. Before he died in 1948 he received many overseas honours and decorations from the Entente Powers in World War I: Order of St Michael and St George (UK); Knight Commander Order of the Crown (Belgium); Grand Officer Order of the Redeemer (Greece); Grand Commander Legion of Honour (France), Commandeurs and Order of the Crown of Italy, Grand Officer.

The Postwar Situation

The news of that the Armistice was signed on the very early morning on 11th November 1918 and that the fighting had stopped six hours later brought joyful relief. However, its celebration was marred for the Franco-Seychellois, because, during the fanfare to celebrate the cease-fire the “Marseillaise”³² was not played (as previously), before or even after “God Save the King”. There was however, good news for the poor in that the unpopular Governor O’Brien was not coming back. He has been replaced by (a good reformer), Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Eustace Edward Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes. (Fiennes ancestors were from “Fiennes” a French commune in Pas-de-Calais, who made possible for William the Conqueror to invade England). Governor Fiennes was the grandfather of Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes the well-known former SAS officer and greatest living explorer. Governor Fiennes arrived at Mahé on 8th October 1918 via South Africa. On the 17th June 1918 that same year *SS Bosphore* of the French Messagerie Maritime made her last called on her way to Marseilles.

Prior to his colonial appointment, he was in the military. At one time he was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty and just before he became a Liberal MP for Banbury in Oxfordshire. As soon as he arrived, after

³² The first French National Anthem in the Seychelles was “*Grand Dieu Sauve le Roi*” the was later adopted by the English as “*God Save The King*”. Most probably the “*Marsiellaise*” of Rouget de Lisle was never official played in the Seychelles during the French period. Even though it was accepted by the Convention it was band by Napoleon 1 who had preferred “*Veillons au Salut de L’Empire*” by Adrein-Simon Boy as his own National Anthem. In the Second Empire It was changed to “*Partant pour la Syrie*” of de Laborde however the “*Marsiellaise*” was restored in 1879.

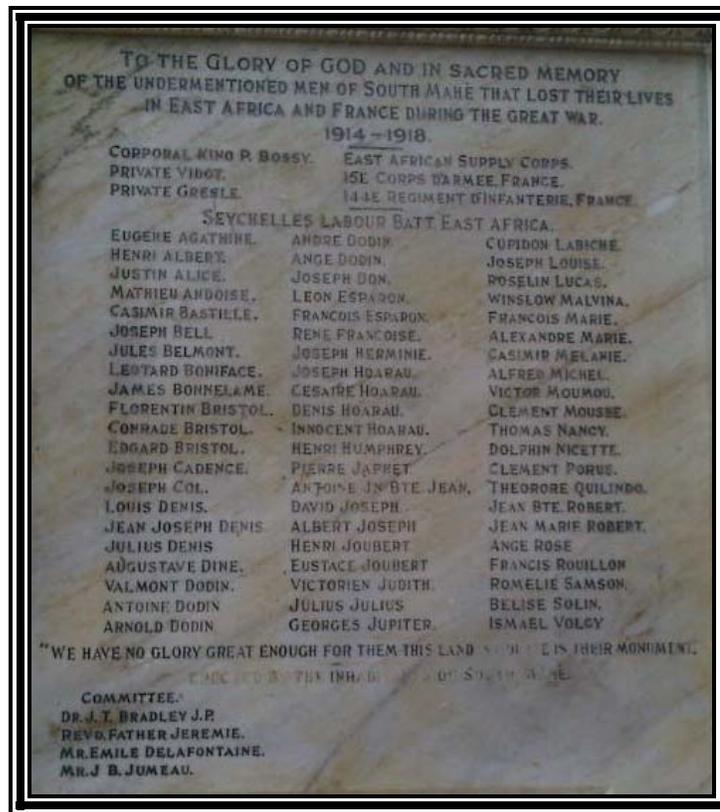
visiting the town, he became very distressed by the state of the economy especially by the dire poverty amongst the poor. He made a request to the Colonial Office in Whitehall to move him in some other bigger places in Australia and New Zealand. His message was simple ...*"So please think of me, and do not leave me hear for long"*. Even though he received no reply from Whitehall he decided to press on with major ambitious social reforms. Before that he sent the King a copy of the Seychelles Legislative Council resolution congratulating the British and Allied victory.

As a man with a weakness for the poor, he based himself on the Gospel of Matthew 25: 32-46 to implement his first "Charitable fund" (which was then known as "La Charité Society") to distribute monthly money to the poor. He introduced his new tax law known as the "Poor Tax" targeting only at the wealthy by adding increased the prices of imported *lodvi* (*l'eau-de-vie* commonly known as brandy), whisky, rum etc. He also put taxes on rented accommodation. His "Poor Tax" was approved by the Legislative Council as well as his bold proposal to build a workhouse for the poor at Plaisance. That institution was completed in less than one year and opened its door to former inmates incarcerated previously with the Lepers on Curieuse Island. It had all the modern facilities, workplace, hospital ward, dispensary etc... and even two chapels. It was named "Fiennes Institute". As former army man Governor Fiennes also made a very important social legislations and very strict rules for the institutes. These included; working hours for those able to do so; no alcohol being permitted on the premises; all the inmates had to wear a uniform and a scale of punishment was also laid down. Soon after, the "Fiennes Institute" was known as *Kazern* "army barracks". However, *Kazern* is also from the French word *caserne*, a hospice for the elderly. Governor Fiennes also made an important social contribution by starting to raise money locally for a modern hospital. Its construction started during his late term of office and finished when he was posted as Governor to Leewards Islands. Governor Fiennes was greatly respected by the population and they gave him a lavish *"champagne d'honneur"* before he left on 14th March 1921.

According to the vital statistics, 1919 was a good year for the Seychelles. This was due to more ships calling at Mahé than the previous year, which enabled the exportation of 4,329 tons of copra compared to only 650 tons in 1918. But Norwegian ship *SS Kongsfos* under

captain A Olsen decided called at Mahé from the 11th November 1919 only on her way to Marseilles. The general export was R2,100,377 an increase of R1,478,873 over 1918. The following numbers in rupees shows an increase in both revenue and expenditure. This was due partly to a grant of R100.000 from Mauritius.

Year	Revenue	Expenditure
1917	446,533	435,560
1918	408,849	441,234
1919	573,643	626,845



War Memorial on the Anglican Church Anse Royale

Photo: Bernard Georges

Celebrations and Contributions

After receiving the news of the signing of the Armistice, committees were set in Victoria and Anse Royale to celebrate the victory. Little is known about the festivity in Victoria, but for Anse Royale it was grandiose, it started with a well organised public meeting and Saturday 23 November 1919 was set for the fête.

The rejoicing fête started with a thanksgiving service at the Church of England. After that a procession headed by local music of tom-toms, drums, *lansiv* (conch-shells), and other primitive musical instruments. They went to Mont Plaisir, then to Anse Louis, Anse La Mouche, Baie Lazare, then via Val d'Andore, Anse Bougaiville and Anse Forban. They arrived at Anse Royale at 7 p.m. and found out that nearly the whole village was illuminated with fairy lamps, and Japanese lanterns. The fête ended with patriotic songs and terminated the singing of "God save the King". In the final address Dr Thomas Bradley spoke about the seven Seychellois volunteers who joined the French Army. According to Bradley one of them joined the French Foreign Legion and four of them came from West Mahé. He also spoke about the bravery of the young Seychellois Dr Samuel Vidot of Royal Army Medical Corps in the trenches in Flanders. Dr Vidot was later awarded the Military Cross (MC).

The crowd was also informed about the death of Antoine Gaston Mellon of Anse Royale who had died on 19 October 1917 while serving in the British Mercantile Marine. Gaston died when his ship the *SS Teespool* was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the English Channel.

On 7 January 1919, Governor Fiennes sent to the Secretary of State the sum of £ 3,600, 12sh 9p. This amount was collected in 1918 from the population of only 23,000 with a poor majority. This War Funds was allocated approximately as follows to different charitable European organisations:

Red Cross Society £2698; Saint John's Ambulance £161; Purple Cross £80; Prince of Wales' Fund £158; Special Funds £52; Naval Prisoners £105; Tobacco Funds £51; Seaman's Hospital £15; French Orphans of War £154 and the Florist and Horticulturists in Europe £40.

Conclusion

World War I, the deadliest conflicts in the human history, has been described by H G Wells as “The War to end all War” yet it produced the deadly sword for Germany to start the Second World War. It started as a European conflict that later engulfed men from the whole of the African continent, without the Africans the allied would not have won the war.

In general, European war historians seem to ignore the major role the Japanese played for the Allied victory. In the later stage of the war Britain had to rely on Japanese-made armaments. After the war however, signed agreements by the Allied recognizing Japan's territorial gains were dishonoured and torn up. To make the matter worse at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Japan's proposal of amending a "racial equality clause" to the covenant of the League of Nations was rejected by the United States, Britain and Australia. Arrogance and racial discrimination towards the Japanese had plagued Japanese-Western relations, this led the way for Japan to join the “Axis” in the Second World War to oppose the Allied forces.

After the capitulation of Germany and her allies the German lost all her colonies and part of her territory, they suffered serious injustice. The American³³ made the matter worse by drafting and inserting the so called “War Guilt” in the Article 231 in the Treaty of Versailles of 28th June 1919 which states the following:

“The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies”.

³³ Article 231 was drafted by two American diplomats Norman H Davis and John Foster Dulles

In this shameful treaty Germany had to confess to be guilty for those atrocities and to pay so called reparations in an amount specified in 1922 to be 236 Billion Gold Marks. However this amount did not include the values which were delivered in goods like 80.000 metric tons of coal per month, and other funds which the occupying victorious allies made from the German merchant navy and the railway system.

This ambiguous treaty did not condemn the Allied Hunger Blockade (which was in fact British,)³⁴ of Germany after the latter had signed the Armistice. The Hunger Blockade which was initiated by Winston Churchill, managed to starve and killed over 700,000 German civilians, mostly women and children including those who died with the flu epidemic nicknamed "Spanish Flu". This figure might have surpassed the death rate of German who died on the battlefield. This British atrocity contravened the international law and was a crime against humanity.

With the down fall of Germany, Britain, France and Belgium took over the vast German colonies in Africa, extending their colonialist and imperialist power. They showed no remorse because their first foothold in Africa was initiated by Germany the principal architect of the Berlin Conference of 15th November 1884. In that conference Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Italy decided to divide the Africa continent amongst themselves.

The war brought some social changes to the Seychellois, when laws on social care were implemented. School meals for starving children who collapsed at school was introduced for the first time. There was also an improvement in the health sector against hookworm that was affecting over 90% of the population. Public pit latrines were built for the first time along the important roads. The sale of licensable produce was regulated to reduce larceny. Important legislation was also passed to preserve edible fruits trees. The following economic plants were introduced to increase agriculture, pasture for livestock and the *baka* production. Sudan grass (*Sorghum*); Rhode grass (*Chloris gayama*) and Teosinte (*Euchlaena mexicana*) from the United States of America. Two types of sugar canes were also

³⁴ C Paul Vincent: The Politics of Hunger Allied Blockade of Germany 1915-1919.

introduced one from Natal in South Africa and the other from South India. They also introduced Palmyrah (*Barassus*) (known also as the “celestial tree”), trees from India in order to expand the mats, baskets and hats industry.

Despite some research there are no definite records on the Seychellois casualties inflicted during the World War 1 and may be there never will be. According to the British records from the CWGC (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) there were 341 deaths out of which two were Mauritius and one Abyssinian and that makes a total of 338. Those who died in France and Madagascar were not included in the list. The nearest general estimated total of those who died is 350, (there are no records for those who might have died in Mesopotamia and in the British Navy) this could be well be above 41% of those who took part, thus making it the highest in the British Commonwealth.

In 1915 there was a proposal to recruit Seychellois for the Dardanelles campaign but little is known if any went on the battle front. However, Governor Fiennes had informed the Secretary of States that some Seychellois had served in Mesopotamia and also in the British Navy. At Mahé “Dardanelles” and “Malakof Street” are two place names that commemorated two major war battlefields. Malakoff Street was named after the Battle of Malakoff during the Crimean War. It is not sure if “Dardanelles” was named after the Battle Dardanelles of 1807 during the Napoleonic Wars or after the Dardanelles Campaign during 1915-1916. A few Seychellois who survived the East African campaign later joined the Seychelles Pioneer Corps and fought in North Africa in the Second World War.

After the War the Seychelles received a few trophies only three are left: a Wilhelmstal bell of the *Königsberg*; a German machine gun and a trench mortar.



A German machine gun; helmet and the Wilhelmsthal bell of the *Königsberg*.

Courtesy: Seychelles History Museum

Ten years after the World War I a war Memorial was unveiled at Mont Fleuri, Mahé. Sadly this memorial commemorates only men of the Seychelles Carrier Corps who lost their lives in the 1914-1918 war, but does not include those who died in France and Madagascar etc. Later a dedicatory panel was added commemorates those Seychellois of the Pioneer Companies and other units who fell in the 1939-45 war.

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