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The Making of a Client? The British Education of Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman, 1954–64

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ABSTRACT

While the close relationship between the British state and Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman (reigned 1970–2020) is widely recognised in the scholarship, the present article explores an aspect of the relationship that has hitherto attracted limited attention: the British role in Qaboos's education and development from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Using a range of largely unexamined primary sources generated by the Arabian Department of the UK Foreign Office, it reveals what a 'British education' consisted of and implied in the case of Qaboos bid Said. It concludes that the British state understood the potential value of exerting an influence over the only son of Sultan Said bin Taymour, and strove to capitalise on its access to Qaboos during a formative period in his life. However, it is argued that the British state's handling of Qaboos's education reveals a lack of power, cohesion, and sometimes of interest. The article shows that the overwhelming influence over Qaboos's education was his father, the sultan. At crucial moments, the Foreign Office failed to cooperate smoothly with other interested institutions, including the Shell oil company. Moreover, the Foreign Office's commitment to the project of educating Qaboos oscillated in intensity and by the time Qaboos returned to Oman in 1964, British attitudes regarding their achievements with the would-be ruler were, at best, ambivalent.

In the aftermath of the July 1970 coup which saw Qaboos bin Said Al Said displace his father, Said bin Taymour, as sultan of Muscat and Oman, the British political resident in the Persian Gulf, Geoffrey Arthur, met the newly installed ruler. The resident was favourably impressed by the degree to which the new ruler was keen to cooperate with his British advisors, commenting that 'an Arab Nationalist might have been forgiven for thinking that he was a British puppet'.[1] Arthur's remark underlines the well-known close association between the United Kingdom and the sultans of Oman. Qaboos's father, Sultan Said bin Taymour, ruled with increasing dependence on British support as he struggled to overcome several armed challenges to his authority. British impatience with Said, and its covert willingness to back a new regime centred on Qaboos, was a decisive factor behind the latter's ousting of his father.

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Following the coup, Britain continued to enjoy a close relationship with Qaboos, cooperating to suppress the Marxist insurgency in the Dhofar province by 1975, and contributing to various development projects undertaken by Qaboos's government. Although Qaboos ultimately steered Oman into full independence from Britain, amicable relations with London were preserved.[2] Yet, as Arthur's comment implies, Qaboos had only the appearance of being a British puppet. The sultan was also an assertive and independent ruler, who moved to restrict British influence over crucial questions of defence and foreign policy from early in his reign.[3]

The purpose of this article is to probe the roots of Arthur's ambivalent remark, by exploring Britain's role in Qaboos's education and formation. The episode can be summarised briefly. In 1958 Sultan Said arranged for his only son Qaboos, then aged seventeen, to study at a small private school in Suffolk. Having spent two years at Phillip Romans' school near Bury St Edmunds, Qaboos began officer cadet training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, passing out in September 1962. This was followed by an attachment with a British regiment in West Germany until February 1963. Much of the spring and summer of 1963 was taken up by a three-month world tour arranged with the assistance of the Foreign Office. Upon returning to Britain in June 1963, Qaboos completed a training course at the Royal Institute of Public Administration in London. This was followed by an extensive tour of Britain and attachments to two English local authorities. He finally returned to Oman in late 1964. Contrary to British hopes and his own ambitions, Qaboos was excluded from government and confined by his father to the Al Hosn palace complex at Salalah, a period of frustration which ended in dramatic fashion in the events of July 1970.

Qaboos's British sojourn fits into a broader phenomenon of educational links between powerful states or empires and subordinate polities. Although the scholarship on this issue tends to focus on mass education initiatives,[4] there is a growing body of literature on the more idiosyncratic problem of the education of would-be sovereigns. A pioneering essay by Terence Ranger on British colonial Africa and subsequent work on the wider British Empire by David Cannadine and the French Empire by Alice Conklin and Christopher Goscha have shown how these regimes utilised education as a means of assimilating local ruling elites into an imperial framework.[5] In addition to the advantages these exchanges offered to the imperial powers, it is apparent that indigenous princely families were often enthusiastic partners in the process. Indigenous rulers saw a Western education for their sons as a means of assimilating valuable skills in areas like languages and military leadership, increasing familiarity with the culture and society of the dominant power and, not least, developing personal contacts with important metropolitans. As the European imperial world gave way to Cold War bipolarity, the quantity and diversity of royal scions receiving a metropolitan education

reached possibly its greatest extent. Among Qaboos's generation of later twentieth-century rulers we can note, to name just three, Hassan II of Morocco, educated at the French-established Collège royal in Rabat, before taking a law degree at the University of Bordeaux; King Hussein of Jordan, a graduate of Victoria College, Alexandria, and briefly a student at Harrow until his succession; and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, another Sandhurst graduate. The fact that so many late-imperial rulers-in-waiting educated under Western imperial influence succeeded in managing the transition to independence indicates that a metropolitan education did not simply spawn inflexible imperial stooges. On the contrary, it may well be that the Western education of would-be rulers – producing, as it did, a cohort of well-informed, outward-looking, and confident young men – played an important role in the phenomenon of monarchical resilience in the Middle East and South Asia.[6]

Qaboos of Oman's British sojourn is well-known in outline to scholars of the modern Persian Gulf. Brief mentions of Qaboos being 'British-educated' are frequent in analyses of modern Oman. These allusions imply that Qaboos received useful training and experience in Britain that helped prepare him for rule, and that exposure to Britain was a background factor in the British-assisted coup which brought him to power, especially as a result of the contacts Qaboos established at Sandhurst with intelligence and military personnel.[7] Among the few works to examine Qaboos's British education in satisfying detail is Abdel Razzak Takriti's *Monsoon Revolution*.[8] Takriti's discussion of Qaboos's education complements his broader contention that 'British colonial ascendancy . . . was the essential factor in anchoring absolutism' in Oman.[9] In essence, he argues that British state policy, in concert with Shell (whose Petroleum Development Oman division held the concession to exploit Omani oil), aimed at cultivating young Qaboos into the 'client' he would become.[10] Philip Romans, Qaboos's tutor-cum-guardian, is cast in Takriti's account as a staunch 'colonialist'.[11] Takriti characterises the world and British tours of 1963 as inspired and directed by the Foreign Office and Shell, with the result that, for instance, the itinerary of the world tour excluded Arab countries; Takriti notes that Qaboos was closely chaperoned by his father's British advisor, the 'reactionary' retired army officer Leslie Chauncy and his wife. Meanwhile, Takriti casts the British tour as a transparent attempt to impress Qaboos with British achievements while indulging his passions for fine-dining and opera.[12] Thus, through exploiting the need of Sultan Said for an education for his only son and likely successor, the British state moulded Qaboos into the man who 'held promise for British policy' on the eve of the July coup.[13]

The present article uses a range of primary sources, mostly generated by the Arabian Department of the Foreign Office, to probe what being 'British-educated' meant for the British state and for Qaboos bin Said. It makes the following points: that Sultan Said, not Whitehall, was the overwhelming initiator of ideas and decisions regarding Qaboos's education; that the

evidence for the British state and 'establishment' (represented by Shell, the British Council and various educational institutions) effectively managing Qaboos's education according to British national interests is flimsy; and that the Foreign Office was ambivalent regarding its achievements with Qaboos. Admittedly, frustrating gaps in the evidential record remain. Qaboos's training at Sandhurst is largely obscure due to restrictions on records. The lack of a bureaucratic government, a formal archival system and a national media in Oman before 1970 means that historians of official British–Omani relations must rely overwhelmingly on British source material. Qaboos himself left few direct traces of his own experiences and attitudes to his education, beyond brief subsequent remarks for public consumption.[14] Yet a formidable corpus of data is available, and it buttresses the ultimate claim of this article: that, while the British state understood Qaboos's education as an opportunity to cultivate a friendly future ruler, a simple reading of the exchange as one between patron and client is to overstate Britain's potency and the effectiveness of its educational apparatus.

The Al Bu Said sultans and wider British policy in the Gulf

From the end of the Second World War until the surprise 1968 'East of Suez' withdrawal decision, British policy towards the Persian Gulf centred on the necessity of Britain remaining the preponderant external power in the region. The Gulf was the last vestige of the *Pax Britannica*, and any relaxation of Britain's century-long pre-eminence would damage British international prestige and image as a global power. Retaining a sphere of influence in the Gulf was also of importance to Britain because the region's handful of polities, each of which was dominated by a ruling family, were seen as vulnerable to 'destabilising' movements such as Arab Nationalism and to interventions by Britain's Cold War rivals. A final reason was the need to safeguard the oil that flowed to Britain and the West via British-based petroleum companies, sustaining British industry and pretentions to global power. Britain's special relations with the sultanate of Oman and Muscat, by which Her Majesty's Government discretely handled Omani foreign affairs and defence, were considered by Whitehall to be crucial to the realisation of broader British regional policy. Oman's extensive territory included a long border with Saudi Arabia, whose relations with Britain were frozen due to frontier disputes, as well as Yemen, then in the throes of a Marxist revolution which would lead to the British withdrawal from Aden in 1967, and which would help spark the decade-long Dhofar rebellion in Oman itself from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Moreover, Oman was home to two British air-force bases, a prized privilege that would be extremely difficult to negotiate elsewhere, particularly after the Suez Crisis. The expectation of oil, finally realised by 1967, was another consistent argument in favour of maintaining Britain's unique

position in Oman.[15] Central to this position were the Al Bu Said sultans. Since Victorian times, the British state had, through the practice of various dark arts of informal imperialism, rendered the sultans acquiescent with British primacy. Yet it was a complicated relationship.[16] Sultan Said bin Taymour, like his father and grandfather before him, chaffed at British scrutiny of his finances and style of rule and, equipped with an agile, legalistic mind and a prodigiously stubborn streak, frustrated many British attempts to direct his government. The sultan was autocratic and distrustful, cleaving to 'traditional' personal rule from his isolated base at Salalah. Said's ruling style did little to endear him to his British advisors or to his own people, many of whom were frustrated at the sultan's unwillingness to deliver significant development. Furthermore, the sultan's sovereignty over much of the Omani interior was itself in question. In 1958, the year in which final decisions were made regarding Qaboos's British education, Sultan Said and the British negotiated an aid package to suppress the religiously inspired insurgency on the Jebel Akhdar massif. Although by 1959 the uprising was quashed, the episode revealed that the Al Bu Said connection with Britain was not without its problems for both parties: the British government found Said an awkward ally, while Said remained under constant attack from his critics for being 'the chief agent of imperialism in the Arab Gulf area'.[17] At the same time, the sultan was ultimately loyal to the British connection and was appreciated as a staunch bulwark against Communism and Arab Nationalism. The British understood that, aside from the sultan, few Omanis were favourable towards their special position in Oman. Cultivating and maintaining the goodwill and cooperation of the sultan and his likely successor was therefore a priority with implications not just for Britain and Oman, but for Britain and its entire Gulf Cold War policy.

'A solid basis of friendship': British attempts to cultivate Qaboos

The British soon discovered that Sultan Said's notorious stubbornness extended also to his son's education. Neil Innes, minister of foreign affairs to Sultan Said from 1953 to 1958, recalled in his memoirs that the Foreign Office harboured early hopes that Qaboos would go to Harrow, following the example of previous Arab royals, Hussein of Jordan, and Faisal of Iraq.[18] However, Said refused to allow his teenage son to leave Salalah, and British efforts instead came to focus on providing a suitable tutor for Qaboos. The search for a tutor, which was described as early as 1953 as 'perennial problem', was primarily the responsibility of the British Council, and its Middle East Department director, Reggie Highwood.[19] After failing to impress Said with his suggestions, Highwood took the opportunity of Said's presence in London in summer 1955 to press the matter, holding meetings with the sultan and arranging for candidates to be interviewed by Said in person. Hopes were high

among senior Foreign Office staff, including the political resident in the Gulf, that a Briton could be found to occupy this potentially significant position.[20] It was not to be: the sultan continued to pronounce himself dissatisfied with the candidates presented to him. Disappointed, Highwood nevertheless dedicated himself to fulfilling Said's subsequent request of finding a suitable English school for Qaboos. Highwood approached at least seven schools across England in 1957–8, from the renowned Millfield boarding school to smaller 'crammer' establishments specialising in small numbers of foreign students – an arduous and often frustrating process, which he referred to stoically as 'the Muscat problem'.[21]

Yet for all his efforts, the idea of sending Qaboos to Phillip Romans' 'crammer' school in rural Suffolk did not originate with Highwood: it came from Major Leslie Chauncy, the British consul general in Muscat. The link between Chauncy and Romans lends some weight to the contention that Qaboos's British education was subject to colonialist and arch-conservative influences. Formerly an officer in the British army in India, Chauncy was described wryly by a contemporary as 'Cast in the colonial mould, for better or worse', and shared the same extreme aversion to political liberalisation as Sultan Said.[22] Meanwhile, Romans had taught and administered at the Baroda College in Gujarat for eighteen years until 1949, after which he spent a sojourn in Hadhramaut, Yemen.[23] Both men's paths had crossed in India before World War II; twenty years later, with Highwood struggling to find a school for Qaboos, Chauncy recommended Romans, citing his success in serving as tutor-cum-guardian to princely families in India.[24] Another former British officer whom Romans impressed was Colonel Hugh Boustead, who retired from a military career spent mostly in the horn of Africa and the Middle East to take up various political postings in the Gulf; he had come to know Romans through his time in the East Aden Protectorate. In 1962, Boustead recommended that the ruler of Abu Dhabi send his son to be tutored and cared for by Romans.[25] It seems that Romans' uncompromising approach to discipline as well as his experience in colonial education endeared him to men such as Boustead and Chauncy. Certainly, his appeal was not all-embracing. Career officials at the Foreign Office including Archie Lamb as well as oil company employees disapproved of entrusting Romans with the care of such sensitive assignments.[26]

There is also incontestable evidence that the Foreign Office attempted to make political capital out of Qaboos's temporary residence in the UK. Detailed evidence for this comes from a minute of May 1961. Here, an Arabian Department official looked ahead to Qaboos's succession to the throne. He raised the possibility that the British government would attempt to bind Qaboos to writing a formal letter declaring his intention to rule in accordance with British advice on important questions (the same terms which Sultan Said had agreed to under duress upon his accession in 1932).

The official projected that such a declaration would be useful should Britain require an extension to its lease of air-force facilities. He recommended that 'we … need to make Qabus our friend now'. Towards this end, he was to take Qaboos to the opera at Covent Garden in a few days.[27] Foreign Office involvement was most intense in spring and summer of 1963, which was envisioned as a brief period in which to inculcate in Qaboos respect and goodwill for Britain before his expected return to the sultanate in the autumn. In April and May 1963 a programme of activities was drawn up by the Arabian Department to begin in June following Qaboos's return from his world tour.[28] This began with a course in 'organisation and methods' at the Royal Institute of Public Administration, a popular training provider for governments of colonial territories preparing for independence or newly-independent states improving their bureaucracies.[29] This month-long course straddling June and July was consolidated by a two-week attachment to Suffolk County Council to witness professional administration in practice.[30] Sandwiched between, in the second half of July, was a tour of Great Britain organised in concert with the Central Office of Information. The tour, taking in a range of sites including the Palace of Westminster for Prime Minister's Questions, the Forth Road Bridge (an ambitious engineering undertaking still under construction), and the Glyndebourne Opera Festival, was patently designed to showcase Britain, and to impress upon Qaboos his importance to the British state.[31] A Foreign Office minute explained that its intentions were to 'ensure that [Qaboos] has a good grasp of administration and of the British way of doing things. His father is a firm friend of the British and we want to maintain this connection when his son takes over'.[32] Thereafter, as will be explored below, Foreign Office interest in Qaboos waned; but in the first half of 1964 Shell placed Qaboos on a short induction course, which included a visit to one of its refineries in the Netherlands.[33]

The Foreign Office also attempted to consolidate its cultivation of Qaboos. An Arabian Department minute spoke of the advantage to be accrued from setting up a meeting between Qaboos and a government minister following his British tour:

> Qabus is expected to succeed his father in due course and with this in mind we are attempting to establish a solid basis of friendship with him. It would provide a notable conclusion to his tour, and consolidate the good relations which already exist, if a Minister could spare a few minutes to receive him and discuss with him informally his impressions from the tour.[34]

The Lord Privy Seal, Edward Heath, was identified as a suitable minister for this task. Heath had already shown himself to be interested in Qaboos, having held talks with Said and contributed to the itinerary of the British tour. Heath was enthusiastic and a meeting was duly arranged.[35]

Finally, there is evidence that the British state successively exploited its access to Qaboos to mould him into an amenable ruler-in-waiting. According to Bill Peyton of Shell in 1964, Qaboos demonstrated 'sensible and firm' ideas on his country and his future, which a colleague at the company ascribed to Qaboos receiving regular Foreign Office briefings.[36] During a visit to Peyton's house in August 1964, Qaboos played with Peyton's children and performed domestic chores – the type of experience which Takriti suggests impressed a sense of 'colonial inferiority' onto Qaboos.[37] According to the senior official Antony Acland, writing of Qaboos in 1971, 'His education was in England and his outlook is in many ways British. He tends therefore to seek and take advice from Englishmen whom he has known in the past'.[38] Foreign Office briefs from the early and mid-1970s identified the 'genuine affection' for Britain which was nurtured during his British sojourn.[39] Qaboos himself was open about the positive impacts of his British education, citing the development of leadership qualities as a result of his Sandhurst training and an awareness of the need to modernise the sultanate once he gained power.[40]

'We should do something quick': British efforts to place Qaboos

Despite the evidence presented above of the British state actively cultivating Qaboos bin Said into a friendly future ruler of Oman, a fuller picture of what 'British-educated' constituted must also consider the limits of British freedom of action in the matter, as virtually all significant decisions were taken by Sultan Said. Neil Innes recalled that the sultan was consistently resistant to outside suggestions concerning Qaboos and his educational needs.[41] Nor was Major Chauncy a potent agent for British influence. Chauncy was unusually friendly with Said, but this tended to result in Chauncy representing the sultan's views to the British government rather than vice versa; moreover, from 1960 Chauncy was in the sultan's service as his personal advisor, and thus was no longer answerable to the Foreign Office.[42] It was Said's conviction that Qaboos's education ought not take place in an Arab environment, rather than British lobbying, that lay behind the search for a British tutor for Qaboos. The Foreign Office's first choice had been a well-qualified Arab with excellent Arabic teaching skills; while the sudden demand from Said for an Englishman appealed to senior diplomats, for the officials charged with finding suitable candidates the stipulation was an unwelcome complication.[43] Said's controlling hand is also seen in the protracted process of finding a British school for Qaboos. Again, the decision to send Qaboos to Britain was the sultan's.[44] Chauncy kept Said briefed on Reggie Highwood's efforts to identify a suitable school, and Said declared a preference for the Millfield public school in Somerset. But Highwood's patient negotiations with the headmaster of Millfield were beset by problems originating with Said. He made unusual demands: that Qaboos take his own Arabic tutor, that no other Middle

Eastern students be educated alongside him and that living conditions be sufficiently spartan.[45] Moreover, Qaboos was virtually unknown; not even Chauncy could give a personal account of his character or abilities. This made it difficult to reassure potential schools that Qaboos would be able to cope with the curriculum and the pressures of a vastly different environment.[46] Said was also unforthcoming concerning the goal of the education, a problem Highwood of the British Council raised repeatedly with Chauncy and the political resident.[47]

The prolonged search for a school also reveals inadequacies and divisions with the British state and wider establishment. Highwood's efforts were the subject of some criticism. Among his detractors was Kenneth Pickthorn, an MP with a particular interest in the sultanate. Pickthorn complained to Chauncy about Highwood, urging that the task of finding a school be transferred from the British Council to the Ministry of Education. Pickthorn also told the Foreign Office 'that we should do something quick' to conclude the matter.[48] From Muscat, Chauncy also registered his frustration at the pace of progress. Claiming that anti-Arab bias may have been a factor in Millfield's reluctance to take Qaboos, he recommended that 'some further help and political pressure' was necessary to focus minds at the British Council and at Millfield.[49] Highwood objected to the application of 'pressure' as unrealistic, a verdict which was accepted by the Arabian Department, but relations remained tense thereafter between him and Chauncy.[50]

The circumstances surrounding the ultimate decision to send Qaboos to Philip Romans' small private school underlines this lack of control and cohesion. The final decision, of course, was Sultan Said's. Having inspected a similar school nominated by Highwood in July 1958 and pronounced it too luxurious, the sultan visited Romans' establishment at Felsham House, near Bury St Edmunds. Clearly, a combination of Romans' dedication to discipline and the recommendation of Chauncy were sufficient to convince Said that his son would be well served under Romans' care. The decision was made quickly by the sultan alone. A Foreign Office official informed Highwood that 'we have just heard that [Said] has decided that his son should start at Mr. Roman's [sic] establishment this September', and that the British Council's services would not hereafter be needed.[51] Five years later, an Arabian Department summary of Qaboos's education recorded, 'We made numerous attempts to persuade the Sultan to see to the boy's education, without success until the Sultan sent him to study with Mr. Romans at Bury St. Edmunds'.[52] Not everyone was convinced at the wisdom of the sultan's choice. Said's former minister for foreign affairs Neil Innes was sceptical about the prospects of Qaboos flourishing at a 'crammer's' establishment in the English countryside.[53] In the London headquarters of the British Council, Reggie Highwood was piqued that his preferred school had not been chosen. Going further, Highwood proffered his 'personal reflections', in which he

admitted that he had never been in favour of a British education for Qaboos. Referring to the recent slaying of the Harrow-educated King Faisal II of Iraq, Highwood opined:

> It is very sad but I cannot see myself that these young men who are going to rule their countries are going to be in the best position to do it if they are educated in entirely alien surroundings at their most impressionable age and return to their countries without a sense of the political currents which are around them. I could not but reflect somewhat bitterly at the memorial service to the late King of Iraq during the oration of a man with whom I had quarrelled violently some years ago in Beirut when he told me he helped the young man get to Harrow and I said I was not sure whether it was a good thing and in fact saw tragedy rather than profit in such an arrangement.[54]

The irony of a British Council official writing in such terms of a British education was not lost on Highwood's critics. An official at the Foreign Office sniffed, 'Highwood's comments come a little oddly from an official of the British Council, whose object is presumably to further the British "way of life" and all that'.[55] Rather than omnipotently using its political and cultural muscle to groom future Gulf clients through education, the process of sourcing tutors and schools for Qaboos reveals the British state fumbling haphazardly to fulfil the demands of Sultan Said.

A colonialist curriculum?

In the only serious academic consideration of Phillip Romans, Qaboos's tutor-cum-guardian from 1958, Abdel Razzak Takriti describes him as a 'colonialist … renowned for his reactionary outlook'.[56] This is not outlandish given Romans' background in India and Yemen and his relationship with Major Leslie Chauncy. Yet the evidence for Qaboos being subject to an imperialist curriculum is inconclusive. A report on Qaboos in a Suffolk newspaper from March 1960 carried a description of Romans' pedagogic aims that was surely crafted by Romans himself:

> Mr. Romans runs his tutorship on a family basis. He likes his students to look to him as a father, and his idea is to provide a home for a few students where they can live and learn before going on to university. But his primary purpose is to bring representatives of various nationalities together on mutual ground to enable them to understand each other better.[57]

Romans' own prospectus asserted that his principal aim to be preparing international students to pass British university entry exams. It then outlined the curriculum and ethos encountered at Felsham House, specifying:

> general compulsory courses in the history and practice of British Institutions, in English language and Literature, and in Current Affairs, directed to giving students that background of knowledge and experience, and the ability for independent work, without which life in a British University cannot be enjoyed to the full. This knowledge will be

> gained in the quiet atmosphere of a country house, and of family life, the lack of which is often a serious handicap to students visiting the United Kingdom, and to the provision of which Mr. Romans attaches very great importance.[58]

If then, we take Romans at his word, the most salient feature of an education at Felsham House was the paternal approach which he took to his charges. How much room was there for the inculcation of 'colonialist' influence? To judge from the observations of others, not much. Here, we may pause to examine some of copious evidence concerning another young Gulf Arab student at Felsham. Shaikh Sultan bin Shakhbut Al Nahyan, son of the ruler of Abu Dhabi, spent time with Romans in 1962. It emerges from these records that there was very little tuition at Felsham House – just thirty minutes per day, with the rest of the hours being devoted to private study.[59] Moreover, the evidence suggests that a great deal of this tuition time must have been devoted to English language learning. A British official in Beirut who talked with Shaikh Sultan before and after his three-month stay with Romans noted 'the extraordinary progress which he had made with his English'.[60] Qaboos was also credited with speaking 'good English' – although not much more – after his combined spells at Felsham House and Sandhurst.[61] The Suffolk newspaper which reported on Qaboos's studies under Romans styled him simply as Qaboos's 'English tutor', and it is likely that language skills dominated his studies, leavened by his listening to classical music, a rapidly growing passion.[62]

Foreign Office evidence suggest that British educational priorities for Qaboos and young men like him are rather more complex than propagandising future clients. First, as the case of Qaboos makes clear, there was no Foreign Office template for the education of would-be rulers, and Romans carried out his duties with minimal guidance or supervision from the Foreign Office. He was, after all, engaged by the sultan not Her Majesty's Government.[63] Nor is there much evidence of a desire to inculcate particular attachment to Britain in these young men – even in confidential correspondence between colleagues with no need to dissimulate. The political residency in the Gulf recommended 'sound practical commonsense advice' with an absence of 'intellectual thinking' for Sultan bin Shakhbut.[64] British representatives in Abu Dhabi described the ideal curriculum for Sultan bin Shakhbut in the following terms:

> There was just no time to learn about William, the Conqueror – though H.G. Wells' outline of World History might be useful, what was required was a quick survey of how a modern state was run, the main trends of world politics, some basic facts of the type which most of us acquire over the years (how the human body works, a basic outline of evolution, some elements of geology and so on).[65]

Of course, it is possible to interpret instruction into 'how a modern state was run' as a euphemism for political indoctrination, and the same can be read into

Archie Lamb of the Foreign Office's call for Sultan bin Shakhbut 'to learn good English and to cope with the world'.[66] But it is worth noting the priority given to areas of less obvious political application such as evolution, geology and anatomy. Moreover, the history book referred to, H.G. Wells' *Short History of the World* (1922), was not mere British propaganda. Wells' book was sharply critical of the Indian Raj, and his overview of the British Empire condemned 'almost despotic' British rule in Egypt and near 'autocracy' in crown colonies.[67] Internal Foreign Office correspondence on their motives for providing a British education for Shaikh Sultan also reveal something more nuanced than the application of propaganda. One official commented that failing to take the chance of educating Sultan would have 'unfortunate consequences . . . for Her Majesty's Government's relations with Abu Dhabi since Sultan might blame us for his frustrated hopes of further education'.[68] Here, a British education was framed as a means of satisfying the ambitions of a young shaikh rather than as a method of nurturing him into a client.

Philip Romans saw himself primarily as the guardian of his charges, and ensured that they led a disciplined domestic life with few luxuries and little unsupervised time. Such a regime caused a breach with Sultan bin Shakhbut, who claimed that life with the Romans was akin to being a 'prisoner'.[69] In Qaboos, however, Romans had a more docile protégé. When observers commented on Qaboos, it was his humility and meekness that impressed them far more than any knowledge acquired or assimilation of Western modes of thought. Bill Peyton of Shell, noting Qaboos's scandalised reaction to a performance of belly dancing at the Indian restaurant they visited together in London in August 1964, compared him to his own 'Presbyterian forebears' – an allusion to Qaboos' firm adherence to Ibadi Islam.[70] As with the selection of Romans, the evidence points to the nature of Qaboos' curriculum being shaped, not by Britain in order to cultivate a future client, but by Sultan Said in order to mould his son's character along his preferred moral lines. Explaining the reasons behind his choosing of Sandhurst for Qaboos following two years at Felsham, Said told a Shell manager that it was to 'have him brought up as a well disciplined young man without having an overriding sense of his own importance'.[71] Chauncy summed up his satisfaction with Qaboos' character following the 1963 world tour also in terms of personality, considering him 'a pleasant, well behaved young man with a good sense of humour', but stressing that it was still necessary for Qaboos to 'learn some discipline' upon his return to Salalah.[72]

Sources suggest that Romans' paternalism rather than his imperialism left the greatest mark on Qaboos. Unlike Sultan bin Shakhbut, Qaboos apparently enjoyed his time at Felsham House, writing to his father to this effect at Christmas 1958.[73] A strong bond was formed between tutor and pupil that lasted well beyond Qaboos's departure for Sandhurst. Between the conclusion of his world tour in June 1963 and his return to Oman in late 1964, Qaboos's

primary residence was Felsham House where Philip Romans continued to act *in loco parentis*, insisting, for instance, that time be allotted for him to take Qaboos on holiday to a remote cottage in Yorkshire in autumn 1963. Qaboos even remained at the Romans house when the sultan was in London, making occasional visits to London for meetings.[74] Qaboos's relationship with the Romans was an enduring one. They remained in contact after the coup and Qaboos spent Christmas Day with Romans, by now a clergyman in Warwickshire, while on a visit to the UK in 1971; in later years Romans and his wife were regular visitors to Oman where they were kept in understated comfort by the Sultan.[75] It seems rather unlikely that Qaboos would have maintained a friendship with his former tutor if he had simply been an instrument of the Foreign Office.

Intensity and torpor: the Foreign Office and Qaboos, 1963–4

As we have seen, the Foreign Office was active in the programme of activities for Qaboos in spring and summer 1963, in which he undertook an extensive world tour and a tour of Britain, completed a training course in public administration and an attachment at Suffolk County Council. But the Foreign Office, though at times intensely involved, was far from omnipotent. The world tour is a case in point. While Takriti's account suggests a combination of the Foreign Office and Shell providing 'red carpet' treatment in a three-month itinerary that deliberately excluded Arab countries, it should be noted that Sultan Said initiated and monitored the entire project, even selecting the ship on which Qaboos and his companions, Major and Mrs Chauncy, would sail on the return voyage from New York.[76] There is in fact no record of any Shell involvement in the world tour, while the Foreign Office's contribution consisted of informing its staff in the various countries being visited of the impending arrival of Qaboos, should assistance be required. That no records were kept of any assistance rendered by British embassies and consulates suggests a somewhat laissez faire attitude to official British involvement in the tour.[77]

When devising the programme of training and events for the months following the world tour, the Foreign Office, as usual, strove to please the sultan. The UK tour, the Royal Institute of Public Administration course and the follow-up attachment at Suffolk County Council were all activities requested and approved by the sultan.[78] The Arabian Department also consulted Qaboos on the UK tour. Elements of the programme, such as a concert at the Glyndebourne Opera Festival, reflected the young man's developing cultural preferences, while minutes also note Qaboos's interest in visiting military establishments in Britain – an early reference to another abiding passion.[79] Philip Romans also played an important role. The decision to send Qaboos on an attachment to Suffolk County Council in Ipswich was

doubtless made primarily because of its proximity to Felsham House; Qaboos commuted by train between Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich for the duration of his attachment. The assignment, despite requiring cooperation from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in its initiation, was almost entirely administered by Romans. Without any formal statement of aims, Romans accompanied Qaboos on his first day, where he met the town clerk to devise a programme for Qaboos 'on the spot'.[80]

Sultan Said's predominance also explains the decision to prolong Qaboos' time in Britain, a period that was mostly spent at Felsham House and included another attachment to a municipal administration, at nearby Bury St Edmunds. By late July, Said had signalled to the political resident in the Gulf that Qaboos ought to remain in Britain. Said explained that '[Qaboos's] house was not ready' – but clearly this was merely an early signal of Said's inability to accommodate himself to Qaboos's maturity and the political imperative of involving his son in government.[81] In any event, it was unwelcome news for the Arabian Department, which was keen to have Qaboos returned as soon as possible to Salalah in order to 'learn the practice of government (Sultanate style) under the watchful eye of his father'.[82] Two officials, Stanley Black and Frank Brenchley, tackled the Sultan separately about his intentions for Qaboos during the former's visit to London in August 1963. Said was impervious to any persuasions on the topic, declaring that he would not take Qaboos back until March 1964.[83] Said's intransigence was not only a strategic reverse for the Foreign Office; it posed the unwelcome problem of how to occupy Qaboos's extended time in Britain. Adamant that Qaboos was to remain in the UK for additional 'training', the sultan, upon being pressed for details, eventually suggested an accountancy course.[84] Black's dry aside that Said's interest in introducing Qaboos to accountancy was not intended as a prelude to Qaboos being 'the next Chancellor of the Muscati Exchequer' reveals the futility of the enterprise from a British viewpoint.[85] Regardless of this scepticism, the Arabian Department approached the British Council and Shell for assistance. However, echoing earlier struggles to find a place for the teenage Qaboos in an English school, so also these channels were unable to assist in 1963.[86] No progress from the British Council is recorded, while Shell claimed not to have a suitable course. Although Shell would in 1964 place Qaboos on an induction course, their uncooperativeness in the Arabian Department's hour of need suggests a less than synergistic relationship with the Foreign Office.

Against this background of indecision, Qaboos and Romans seized the initiative, presenting a joint plan for the remainder of Qaboos's time in Britain at a meeting at the Foreign Office on 10 September. Stanley Black minuted Romans and Qaboos's opening remarks:

> Mr. Romans said immediately that he understood that the Sultan had given Sayyid Qabus discretion to arrange his activities in consultation with him and with the Foreign

> Office, and that he [Romans] had come to the conclusion that it would not be useful for Sayyid Qabus to attend a formal course of instruction. Sayyid Qabus agreed.[87]

Instead, Romans and Qaboos suggested another attachment, this time to Bury St Edmunds municipal council. Here, Romans was 'confident [Qaboos] would obtain valuable experience, by observation rather than by study, of the administration of public accounts'. Qaboos proposed that he make occasional visits to military establishments and institutions engaged in research on problems such as agriculture and tropical medicine.[88] Takriti casts this meeting as the moment when the British state, through its agent Romans, 'blocked the possibility' of further education for Qaboos.[89] But a careful reading of the passage, with an appreciation of its wider context, puts it in a different light. The suggestion of another local government assignment must be seen as a pragmatic response to challenging circumstances: with the academic year about to start and no course seemingly available for Qaboos – not least because of Qaboos's lack of relevant educational qualifications – there were probably few alternative means of satisfying the sultan's wish for Qaboos to learn accountancy. Second, it seems as though Qaboos made a genuine contribution to the suggested programme, and was not simply a pawn in Foreign Office intrigue. The suggested attachment was probably also based on Qaboos's personal preferences: remaining at the familiar Felsham House was more suited to the shy, Bach-loving Qaboos than another formal course of study and a change of domestic arrangements. A relieved Stanley Black welcomed these proposals as 'very sensible' but, of course, it was not a Foreign Office decision. The sultan, the ultimate arbiter, was less impressed. His acquiescence in the Bury St Edmunds attachment was lukewarm; he ruled out Qaboos's ideas of visiting military and research establishments because, opined Black, he felt that Qaboos had had enough 'V.I.P. treatment'.[90]

Having given its support to the Romans-Qaboos initiative, Foreign Office interest in Qaboos's education declined, its focus instead fixed on the problem of persuading the Sultan to give Qaboos experience in sultanate government. Here again, the Arabian Department revealed its limitations rather than its omnipotence. Time and again it concluded that any effort to intervene in a 'family matter' would fail.[91] That Philip Romans informed the department of meetings in London between Qaboos and his father at this time also suggests a waning Foreign Office interest in Qaboos's movements.[92] Certainly, there was official disillusionment with the drift of events. A note by Frank Brenchley of June 1964 recorded bluntly that: 'The Sultan has been surprisingly slow about allowing him back to the Sultanate and Qabus has been forced to kill time for the last year. He has spent it with a tutor in Suffolk, with very little to do except read'.[93] Such a pithy verdict on its achievements with Qaboos is more suggestive of missed opportunities by the British state than successful exploitation.

An ambivalent legacy

It is tempting to frame Qaboos's British education teleologically, through the prism of the July coup, and to view these six years as the vital apprenticeship for his British-backed tilt for power. However, there is much contemporary evidence to suggest that the episode was viewed with some ambivalence by British officials. A memorandum from July 1963 spoke of 'glowing reports' earned by Qaboos at Sandhurst 'for his officer qualities, determination and ability to inspire respect of his comrades'. It continued that Qaboos had received 'good reports' from the Royal Institute of Public Administration and Suffolk County Council.[94] Yet the same memorandum alluded to Qaboos's limited command of English which caused him to struggle at his Sandhurst exams. Other official remarks on Qaboos' education suggest shortcomings and knowledge gaps. An April 1963 minute, compiled as the Foreign Office was busy organising his programme of activities for that summer, offered the miserly observation that Qaboos was 'reasonably well educated and has been through Sandhurst'. This was glossed in the margin: 'He speaks good English and does not need to be chaperoned'.[95] When pondering whether Qaboos would gain any value from an attachment to an English county council, officials were frank in their admission that Qaboos had had little formal education and that his potential to flourish was more by dint of his personality than his training:

> As far as we know he does not know very much about economics or politics, and not much about administration beyond what is taught at Sandhurst (although this was a fair amount), but we are given to understand that there is no doubt that he would apply himself and take any instruction given to him very seriously.[96]

Foreign Office papers on Qaboos during and after his spell in Britain do not portray him as a compelling ruler-in-waiting. A letter from the consulate general in Muscat to the political residency of the Gulf of April 1960 speculated that:

> If the Sultan should die suddenly in the next few years, I do not think Qabus would stand a chance unless we decided to support him and, in fact, impose him on the Family Council and I don't imagine we would do that. Qabus has never been to Muscat or Oman in his life as far as I know, and many of the Family do not know him.[97]

Such a prognosis reveals that, at least at this moment, a British education was not regarded as a highroad towards the succession of a dependable and secure ruler. Moreover, by 1963 it was clear to officials that training Qaboos in the UK was a poor substitute for the Foreign Office's twin objectives of seeing him placed in a political role in Muscat and raising his profile within the sultanate, including with the broader Al Bu Said family, whose support was necessary for a smooth succession of ruler.[98] In July 1963, an Arabian Department minute on Qaboos and his prospects concluded that:

> Qabus has little experience of the world and none whatever of his father's people outside the Palace at Salalah. It is greatly to our interest that the Sultan should now bring his son forward so that he becomes known to his people, learns about the country and has some experience of actual government work.[99]

The problem was to convince Sultan Said. We have already noted the reticence with which Foreign Office officials handled Said on this question. Ironically, when Brenchley of the Arabian Department directly suggested that the Sultan give Qaboos governmental experience without delay, Said parried by suggesting that the various kinds of administrative training Qaboos had received in Britain were ultimately not useful in the sultanate, because government in Muscat 'was not divided into Departments like Whitehall'.[100] Thus, with one retort, Qaboos's six-year tenure in Britain resembles political exile rather than apprenticeship for rule.

After finally returning to the sultanate in November 1964, Qaboos's British education was scarcely noted by British observers. The consul general's annual report for 1966 considered him to be a promising prospect; this was not adduced to his educational background, but rather to his Dhofari heritage on his mother's side.[101] A year later, Qaboos was again mentioned as being of potential value to British policy, but this time because of a mooted marriage which, it was surmised, would effect his promotion to political responsibilities in Muscat.[102] A brief from 1967 summarising important moments in the Sultanate's recent history made a bald reference to Qaboos's British education and added the familiar note that his knowledge of Oman and its people remained 'slight'.[103] Despite his British background, key British personnel, even on the eve of the coup, were pessimistic about Qaboos's political prospects. Reports concluded that Qaboos cut 'a rather pathetic figure' at the Al Hosn palace. The British consul general, D.C. Carden, though holding secret talks with Qaboos that were ultimately to be crucial preludes to the 1970 coup, did not consider Qaboos capable of leading the country single-handed should Said lose power, a view shared by the consecutive political residents in the Gulf, Sir William Luce and Sir Stewart Crawford.[104]

Conclusion

Britain, largely through the work of the Foreign Office and related departments, Sandhurst and professional educators such as Philip Romans, played a formative role in the development of Qaboos bin Said as future ruler of Oman. However, the evidence suggests that there were firm limits to what Britain could achieve. First, the primacy of Sultan Said must be recognised. From Said's point of view, the advantage of sending his son to Britain was to shield him from unwholesome Arab influences, while moulding him into a disciplined and humble kinsman. That these aims were compatible with the British priority of developing friendly relations with Qaboos was a happy

coincidence for the Foreign Office. Moreover, while Whitehall officials worked assiduously to reconcile the sultan's desires with British interests and capabilities, there is also arresting evidence of ineffectiveness and disunity within British institutions concerning Qaboos. The British Council, various public schools and Shell were all at times unable or unwilling to assist the Arabian Department in its efforts to find suitable programmes and activities for Qaboos. Finally, what we know of the content and character of Qaboos's education reveals the Foreign Office to have been remarkably unconcerned with his curriculum. Aside from the propagandist UK tour of 1963, the Foreign Office was largely content to leave the education of Qaboos in the hands of Phillip Romans, who was more surrogate parent than vehicle of national policy. That the Foreign Office was content to allow Qaboos to rusticate for over a year in Bury St Edmunds, amid that small town's administrative problems – hardly the most suitable setting for the development of a future personal ruler of a crucial Middle Eastern ally on the cusp of oil wealth – suggests a failure to exploit fully the opportunity to subject Qaboos to sustained influence. In terms of the broader phenomenon of princely client-building through Western education, the crucial role of Sultan Said underlines the importance of local 'sovereign agency' in these initiatives.[105] By the same token, it casts some doubt on the potency of Western states to cultivate clients. Further research into similar cases may reveal whether the education of Qaboos is an outlier in this regard or something more typical.

Notes

1. Quoted in James Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman: Political, Military and Diplomatic Relations at the End of Empire* (London, 2014), 90.
2. Calvin Allen and W.L. Rigbsee, *Oman Under Qaboos: From Coup to Constitution* (London, 2000); Marc DeVore, "Britain's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963–75," *Cold War History* 11, no. 3 (2011): 441–71; Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency*; Joseph Kechichian, *Oman and the World: The Emergence of an Independent Foreign Policy* (Santa Monica, CA, 1995), 132–4.
3. John Townsend, *Oman: The Making of a Modern State* (London, 1977), ch. 4; Nikolas Gardner, "The Limits of the Sandhurst Connection: The Evolution of Oman's Foreign and Defence Policy," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 6, no. 1 (2015): 45–58.
4. E.g. J.A. Mangan, ed., *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988); Natalia Tsvetkova, "International Education during the Cold War: Soviet Social Transformation and American Social Reproduction," C*omparative Education Review* 52, no. 2 (2008): 199–218.
5. Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983), 211–62; David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London, 2002), 58, 78, 185; Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA, 1997), 199–200, 208–9; Christopher Goscha, "Colonial Monarchy and Decolonisation in the French Empire: Bao Dai, Norodom

Sihanouk and Mohammed V," in *Monarchies and Decolonisation in Asia*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Cindy McCreery (Manchester, 2020), 152–74. For a case study of the metropolitan education of a client-sovereign; see Alex McKay, "'That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs': The Education of Maharajah Sidekon Namgyal Talku of Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 39, no. 2 (2003): 27–52.

6. Susan Gilson Miller, *History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge, 2013), 162; Goscha, "Colonial Monarchy and Decolonisation"; Robert Aldrich, "The Himalayan Kingdoms, British Colonialism and Indigenous Monarchs After the End of Empire," in *Monarchies and Decolonisation*, 65–7. On monarchical resilience see e.g. Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (Albany, NY, 1999), 240–1, which gives short shrift to the role of education.
7. Ian Skeet, *Oman: Politics and Development* (Basingstoke, 1992), 38–9; Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency*, 54, 74–5, 104, 222; DeVore, "Britain's Last Hot War," 446, 450; Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultan*s (Harmondsworth, 1974), 288; J. E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremac*y, E-book edn. (London, 2007), ch. 1.
8. Abdel Razzak Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution: Republicans, Sultans, and Empires in Oman, 1965–76* (Oxford, 2016), 181–7; John Beasant and Christopher Ling, *Sultan in Arabia: A Private Life* (Edinburgh, 2004), covers the episode in detail, but its value is compromised by the omission of sources and its sensationalist and prurient approach.
9. Takriri, *Monsson Revolution*, 3.
10. Ibid., 219.
11. Ibid., 45 (quote), 182, 184.
12. Ibid., 182–3.
13. Ibid., 173.
14. Anne Joyce, "Interview with Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said," *Middle East Policy* 3, no. 4 (1995): 1–6; Judith Miller, "Creating Modern Oman: An Interview with Sultan Qaboos," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 3 (1997): 13–18.
15. Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency*, ch. 1.
16. See J.E. Peterson, *Oman: Political Foundations of an Emerging State* (London, 1978), ch. 2.
17. Miriam Joyce Haron, "Britain and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and Dependencies," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 4, no. 1 (1993): 90–102; and Transcript, Voice of the Arabs broadcast, 1 June 1958, FO [Foreign Office Records, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew] 371/132903 (quote).
18. Neil McLeod Innes, *Minister in Oman: Memoirs of Oman in the 1950's* (Cambridge, 1987), 181.
19. Reggie Highwood, "Teachers for the Persian Gulf," c. 27 October 1953, BW [British Council Records, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew] 114/7.
20. Major Leslie Chauncy to Political Residency, 29 May 1955, FO 1016/437; and Highwood to Christopher Ewart Biggs, 25 July 1955, FO 371/114767.
21. Highwood to Sir Bernard Burrows, December 5, 1957, FO 371/132879.
22. Pauline Searle, *Dawn over Oman* (Abingdon, 2016), 22.
23. *Bury Free Press*, March 11, 1960.
24. Chauncy to John Muir, February 19, 1958, FO 371/132879.
25. Col. Hugh Boustead to Archie Lamb, 25 May 1962, FO 371/163075; Boustead to E.F. Given, 1 July 1962, ibid.
26. Lamb to Peter Lienhardt, 19 June 1962, FO 371/163075; Francis Brown to A.R. Walmsley, 23 August 1962, ibid.

27. Minute by K.H. Jones, 23 May 1961, FO 371/156821. For the 1932 undertaking, see Letter from Said bin Taymour, 10 February 1932, IOR [Indian Office Records, British Library]//R/15/1/737.
28. S.M. Black to Mr Murray, Information Executive Dept, 26 April 1963, FO 371/168725; Black, Proposed Programme for Qaboos, 15 May 1963, ibid.; Minutes, "Visit of Qabus to this country and his attendance at the Royal Institute of Public Administration", ibid.
29. Kate Jenkins and William Plowden, *Governance and Nationbuilding: The Failure of International Intervention* (Cheltenham, 2006), 18–19; Raymond Nottage, "The Royal Institute of Public Administration, 1939–1972," *Public Administration* 50, no. 4 (1972): 430, 438–30.
30. Black to Capt W.C. Kendall, 27 May 1963, FO 371/168725.
31. Detailed Itinerary for Qaboos bin Said, FO 371/168725.
32. Minute by Black, "Visit of the Son of the Sultan of Muscat," April 30, 1963, FO 371/168725.
33. J.N. Henderson, "The Sultan of Muscat and Oman," June 30, 1964, FO 371/174580.
34. Minutes, "Sayyid Qabus bin Said," July 17–18, 1963, TNA, FO 371/168725.
35. Minute by Black, 25 July 1963, FO 371/168725; and T.F. Brenchley, "The Sultan of Muscat and Oman," July 31, 1964, FO 371/174580.
36. Bill Peyton (Shell, London) to R.A.B. Clough (Shell, Doha), 13 August 1964. MEC [Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford], Paxton Box 9/3; Clough to Peyton, 1 September 1964, ibid.
37. Peyton to Clough, 13 August 1964. MEC, Paxton Box 9/3; and Tarkriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 186.
38. Antony Acland, "Title of the Sultan of Oman," February 25, 1971, FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew] 8/2244.
39. Middle East Dept Brief on Conversation Topics with Sultan Qaboos, December 1974, FCO 8/2244; and Minute, "The Sultan of Oman," 1971, FCO 8/2244.
40. Townsend, *Oman*, 171; and Miller, "Creating Modern Oman," 16.
41. Innes, *Minister in Oman*, 180–1.
42. Searle, *Dawn over Oman*, 22; Chauncy to Burrows, November 21, 1957, FO 371/132879; Chauncy to Sultan Said, January 24, 1958, ibid; Chauncy to Muir, February 19, 1958, ibid; Minute by A.R. Walmsley, March 24, 1958, FO 371/132903; and Telegram from Arabian Department to Political Residency, Bahrain, August 17, 1960, FO 371/148907.
43. Christopher Pirie-Gordon to Highwood, August 16, 1955, FO 371/114767.
44. British Council Representative, Persian Gulf, Annual Report 1959–60, BW 114/6; Innes, *Minister in Oman*, 181.
45. Chauncy to Burrows, November 21, 1957, FO 371/132879; Highwood to Burrows, December 5, 1957, ibid; Chauncy to Muir, February 19, 1958, ibid; Highwood to I.T.M. Lucas, July 8, 1958, ibid.
46. Chauncy to Lucas, May 15, 1958, FO 371/132879.
47. Burrows to Chauncy, December 17, 1957, FO 371/132879; Chauncy to Burrows, November 21, 1957, ibid.
48. Minutes, "Education of Sultan's son," July 18, 1958, FO 371/132879; Minute by Black, "Visit of Mr. Robert Edwards to the Sultanate," November 1, 1963, FO 371/168699; Lucas to Chauncy, April 29, 1958, FO 371/132879 (quote).
49. Chauncy to D.M.H. Riches, 8 January 1958, FO 371/132879.
50. Lucas to Chauncy, April 29, 1958, FO 371/132879. The British Council's failure to find a school for Qaboos seems to have made the organisation reluctant to involve

themselves in similar attempts. See the correspondence regarding British educational assistance to Sultan Said's nephews in 1963: FO 371/168721.

51. H.W. King to Highwood, 18 July 1958, FO 371/132879; Minutes, "Education of Sultan's son", 18 July 1958, ibid. Sultan Said was accompanied on his British visit by his experienced finance minister, Maqbul Khan Hussain, though it seems unlikely that he was instrumental in shaping Said's decision, and it is not recorded whether he visited Felsham House: Telegram, Burrows to Foreign Office, 6 May 1958, FO 371/132902. For Hussain's career, see Allen and Rigsbee, *Oman Under Qaboos*, 5, 22.
52. Minute, "Sayyid Qaboos," July 1963, FO 371/168725.
53. Innes, *Minister in Oman*, 181.
54. Highwood to Eric Deuchars, 14 August 1958, FO 371/132879. For the memorial service, see *The Time*s, 31 July 1958. The orator was Gerald de Gaury.
55. Minute by Lucas, "Education of Sultan's son," July 18, 1958, FO 371/132879. Substantially the same is Lucas to Chauncy, 21 August 1958, ibid.
56. Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 184. Takriti describes Romans as a clergyman. In fact, he was a lay reader at the local Anglican church and did not take holy orders until after Qaboos's time with him.
57. *Bury Free Press*, 11 March 1960.
58. Boustead to Given, 1 July 1962, FO 371/163075.
59. H.A. Hankey (Embassy, Beirut) to Francis Brown (Political Residency, Bahrain), 26 August 1962, FO 371/163075.
60. Ibid.
61. Black to Murray, 26 April 1963, FO 371/168725; Middle East Dept Brief on Sultan Qaboos, December 1974, FCO 8/2244.
62. *Bury Free Press*, 11 March 1960; and "Biographical Note: The Sultan of Oman," June 1971, FCO 8/1681.
63. See also the case of the son of Shaikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi, a student at Eton in 1967–8: FCO 8/878.
64. Brown to Walmsley, 12 September 1962, FO 371/163075.
65. A.J.M. Craig (Political Agency, Abu Dhabi), to Walmsley, 28 August 1962, FO 371/163075.
66. Lamb, Minute on Shaikh Sultan, 13 September 1962, FO 371/163075.
67. H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World* (New York, 1922), 394–5, 405, 407.
68. Walmsley to Brown, 10 September 1962, FO 371/163075.
69. Lamb to Lienhardt, 19 June 1962, FO 371/163075.
70. Peyton to Clough, 13 August 1964, MEC, Paxton Box 9/3; Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 182.
71. Clough to Peyton, 1 September 1964, MEC, Paxton Box 9/3.
72. Ibid; and Peyton to Clough, 13 August 1964, MEC, Paxton Box 9/3.
73. Riches, 'Minutes on meeting with Said bin Taimour on 3 January 1959', FO 371/140291.
74. Minute by Brian Pridham (Consulate General, Muscat), 15 August 1963, FO 371/168725.
75. T.J. Clark, 'Minister of State's Call on the Sultan of Oman', 11 December 1974, FCO 8/2244; Besant and Ling, *Sultan in Arabia*, ch. 2.
76. Telegram, Consulate General Muscat to Foreign Office, 4 February 1963, FO 371/168725; Consulate General, Muscat, to Passport Office, 4 February 1963, ibid; Chauncey to Phillips, 3 February 1963, ibid; Chauncey, "|Itinerary", March 1963, ibid.

77. Circular Letter from Arabian Dept to Embassies and Consulates, 11 March 1963, FO 371/168725; Black, "The Sultan's gratitude for courtesy, kindness, hospitality", 12 July 1963, ibid.
78. Black to Murray, 26 April 1963, FO 371/168725; Black to G.I. Chant (Dept of Technical Cooperation), 30 April 1963, ibid; Black to Kendall, 27 May 1963, ibid. Said conveyed his thanks to the Foreign Office and the Central Office of Information for organising the UK tour and the RIPA course: Kendall to Arabian Dept, 22 August 1963, ibid.
79. Black to Murray, 26 April 1963, FO 371/168725; Black, Proposed Programme for Qaboos, 15 May 1963, ibid; Black to Kendall, 27 May 1963, ibid.
80. Minute by Black, 25 July 1963, FO 371/168725; Minute by Pridham, 6 August 1963, ibid.
81. Arabian Dept Memorandum on Qaboos bin Said, July 1963, FO 371/168725.
82. Brief on Qaboos bin Said [undated: July 1963], FO 371/168725.
83. Black to J.S.R. Duncan (Consul General, Muscat), 8 October 1963, FO 371/168725.
84. Minutes, "Hopes that there will be an opportunity to talk the Sultan about Qabus' future", August – September 1963, FO 371/168725.
85. Ibid.
86. Minutes, "Qabus' future", August – September 1963, FO 371/168725; Minute on Qaboos by Black, 11 September 1963, ibid.
87. Minute on Qaboos by Black, 11 September 1963, FO 371/168725.
88. Ibid.
89. Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 184.
90. Black to Duncan, 8 October 1963, FO 371/168725.
91. Brenchley, "The Sultan of Muscat and Oman," July 31, 1964, FO 371/174580; Minutes, "'Qabus' future," August – September 1963, FO 371/168725; Arabian Dept Memorandum on Qaboos bin Said, July 1963, ibid.
92. Minute by Pridham, 15 August 1963, FO 371/168725.
93. Brenchley, "The Sultan of Muscat and Oman," 31 July 1964, FO 371/174580.
94. Arabian Dept Memorandum on Qaboos bin Said, July 1963, FO 371/168725.
95. Black to Murray, 26 April 1963, FO 371/168725.
96. Chant to R.A. Pilcher (Ministry of Housing and Local Government), 22 July 1963, FO 371/168725.
97. W.N. Monteith (Consulate General, Muscat) to M.C.G. Man (Political Residency, Bahrain), 7 April 1960, FO 371/149169.
98. Brief on Qaboos bin Said [undated: July 1963], FO 371/168725; Minute, "Qabus' future", August – September 1963, ibid.; Minute on Qaboos by Brenchley, 1 October 1963, ibid.
99. Arabian Dept Memorandum on Qaboos bin Said, July 1963, FO 371/168725; Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 186.
100. Minute, "'Qabus' future," August – September 1963, FO 371/168725.
101. D.C. Carden, Annual Report on Muscat and Oman, 1966, TNA, FCO 8/570.
102. Carden, Annual Report on Muscat and Oman, 1967, TNA, FCO 8/570.
103. Joint Research Department Memorandum, "Historical Summary of Events in the Persian Gulf . . . , 1953–64," January 19, 1967, FO 464/49.
104. Miriam Joyce, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960–69* (London, 2003), 96, 99.
105. See Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "Sovereignty in the Global South: Monarchy between Ornamentalism and Royal Cosmopolitanism," *History Australia* 18, no. 2 (2021): 205–18.

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