

**FROM EMPIRE TO COMMONWEALTH
AND LEAGUE OF NATIONS:**

**INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF IMPERIALIST-
INTERNATIONALISM, 1915-1926**

By

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

I hereby declare, that all parts of this thesis are my own work and that it has not, partially or in entirety, been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

The thesis is 87.234 words long, footnotes and appendices included.

21 July 2019

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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ABSTRACT

During the nineteen-tens and -twenties the British Empire was transformed into the British Commonwealth of Nations and the League of Nations was created and began its work.

This thesis argues that from the perspective of a loosely defined group of public academics and politicians from the British Empire, here identified as imperialist-internationalists, these two events were dual processes, as they considered both the Commonwealth and the League natural steps of progression from the British Empire of the early twentieth century. By analysing selected perspectives on empires as peacemakers from antiquity to the late nineteenth century and the education of the imperialist-internationalists it is argued that they belonged to an established Western tradition of seeing empires as a positive form of peaceful international organisation. However, like many contemporaries, they were critical of the traditional model of empire where all power was centred in the imperial metropolis as a valid form of international governance.

With a focus on their published contributions to the public debate, supported by selected archival material, it is demonstrated how the imperialist-internationalists promoted the existence of what they named the British Commonwealth of Nations before it was given any kind of legal recognition, attributing specific values of democracy and equality to its constituent parts. Likewise, it is demonstrated how they identified the outbreak of World War One as an opportunity to reorganise the world to promote international cooperation, and how they worked to use British imperial experience in the formation of the League and formulation of the Covenant.

Finally, it is argued that E.H. Carr's rejection of the interwar thinkers as utopians was unjust as they tried to use what they thought was an established model. As a consequence, applying Carr's lens has limited the existing scholarship of several members of the imperialist-internationalists.

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1: Introduction

The slaughter that took place during World War I prompted an intense interest in the years between 1915 and 1919 about how best to prevent major new wars from happening again. The focus of this interest became the creation of the League of Nations which, it was hoped, would provide a permanent forum for international debate and dispute settlement rather than taking the form of just another anti-war pact. Although the people involved with creating the British proposal for the League laid down the initial groundwork before the end of the War, their ideas subsequently became the focus of criticism. E.H. Carr concluded in his famous 1939 book *The Twenty Years' Crisis* that the League's failure to prevent conflict demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the ideas put forward by those who helped to influence its creation. Yet today, a hundred years after World War I, there is still nearly universal membership of the League's successor, the United Nations, and despite all the challenges and charges of irrelevance laid against it, very few people can imagine abolishing it without setting up a new international organisation in its place. The discussions that takes place today seldom focus on abolishing the United Nations outright, but rather consider how best to reform it, something that might be seen as evidence of the clear success of the ideas that helped to shape the formation and development of the League given that it had no obvious predecessor.

And yet, as this thesis will argue, there was one group of thinkers from the British Empire who thought about these issues in a rather different way (the group referred to later on as the 'imperialist-internationalists'). Rather than seeing the League of Nations as an entirely new creation, founded on grand ideas of development and democracy, they saw it as modelled on something that already existed, a model that

they believed fostered international cooperation between countries at various stages of development spread out across the world: the British Empire. Taking the view that the Empire had developed organically from empire into a new kind of international organisation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this group of thinkers saw the British Empire as both a model for the League, and as a separate international organisation that needed to continue its own organisational development side by side with the League.

This thesis investigates the ideas developed by these thinkers about the Empire's role as an international organisation and possible model for the League of Nations, along with their ideas about how the Empire could and should itself develop into a Commonwealth, seeking to show how both represented a kind of Hegelian endpoint for the organic development of the British Empire. It covers the period from 1915, when both the League idea and ideas of Commonwealth first started to be widely discussed, through to the aftermath of the Imperial Conference of 1926, when Dominion status was formulated and the League had become well-established.

1.1 British concepts of 'empire' in the early 20th century:

The concept of 'empire' has had a variety of connotations in the Western world since Antiquity, undergoing a particular revolution during the 20th century. At the start of the century, empires were the main international actors, but their subsequent decline, combined with the growth of a critical idiom condemning the way in which empires had fostered brutal exploitation of the marginalised, meant that within a few decades 'imperialism' had become a kind of shorthand to describe what was worst in the near

past. The term 'Empire' became a term of abuse, as in US President Ronald Reagan's denunciation of the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire'.¹

The early twentieth century, however, was still the heyday of modern imperialism.

Lionel Curtis, in his 1916 *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, could list all the forty three independent states of the world, of which more than ten were clearly defined as empires, and the main European empires alone ruled between them more than half the population of the world.² With empires an entirely ubiquitous fact of life, they were for many people simply something that existed rather than a focus for reflection (although in reality much metropolitan culture was profoundly shaped by ideas of empire). Among the politicians and academics who did think about empires, some on the left believed them to be immoral or inefficient, while many others considered them beneficial, but expressed different ideas about what the British Empire was and should be. A brief discussion of these attitudes in terms of such ideal types can perhaps be helpful.

--*Hardliners*--

Conservative hardliners, of whom Winston Churchill may be considered the best-known example, maintained that the British Empire was built on a relationship between a colonial centre and colonies whose main purpose was to provide the centre with resources, whether raw materials from Africa or soldiers from the Dominions.

Wm. Roger Louis, in his excellent book on Leo Amery and Winston Churchill, *In the*

¹ R. Reagan, 'Address to the National Association of Evangelicals ("Evil Empire Speech")' (8 March 1983), at <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/reagan-evil-empire-speech-text/> (29 November 2013). The term 'evil empire' had at the time been popularised by the original Star Wars trilogy, the second of which was called *The Empire Strikes Back*.

² L. Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (Macmillan, 1916), plate inserted at p. 69. With a world population listed as 1.721.386.045, the larger European empires (Russian Empire included) ruled about nine hundred thousand all together. The British and the Chinese Empires each ruled about 25% of the world's population, with the British Empire slightly ahead of the Chinese according to Curtis' figures.

*Name of God, Go!*³, gives a powerful sense of the sheer futility of Amery's attempts to make Churchill understand how it could be argued that Britain owed India money after the World War 2 for the services rendered.⁴ Churchill for his part consistently argued during World War 1 that Australian soldiers should be used in European theatres of war on the grounds that if Australia was lost it could be won back later, but if Britain was lost then the war was lost. In short, for Churchill and those who thought like him, Great Britain *was* the Empire, while the colonies and dominions were supply grounds that could be used in the manner most useful to the core. Although that logic may have helped win the War in 1914-18, it was not particularly popular in the periphery, and represented a centralised view of empire that was in reality already outmoded.⁵ And, clearly, such an approach had little to offer in terms of theory or ideology for developing a new concept of empire, as it was essentially trying to freeze intra-imperial relations in place.

--*Anti-imperialists*--

At the opposite end of the spectrum were those who saw the very concept of 'empire' as essentially corrupt, offering no opportunity for redemptive change and development. This view held empires to be utterly without any moral or even financial justification in the modern world. The subjection of foreign peoples based on a presumed superiority was deemed morally unacceptable, as one colony after another demonstrated the capacity of its elite to go to western universities and return home to lead calls for self-determination, independence, and even equality with the

³ W.R. Louis, *In the Name of God, Go! : Leo Amery and the British Empire in the age of Churchill* (Norton, 1992).

⁴ W.R. Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!* (1992), pp. 164-166.

⁵ Discussions of Churchill's fraught relations with Australia can be found in many places, including recently G. Freudenberg, *Churchill and Australia* (Macmillan 2008).

'white races'. Such critical views of empire were in the nineteenth century mainly found among laissez-faire liberals, who combined a commitment to free trade with radical politics, but was by the early twentieth century most associated with those who identified themselves as socialist. As Japan had shown its ability to modernise, becoming sufficiently strong to win the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, it was simply untenable to claim that only white people were capable of developing an industrial society. When coupled with a radical critique of capitalism and imperialism, it became a popular socialist view to reject imperialism in any form and under any justification. This rejection of imperialism was echoed by the traditional American rejection of empires (although the foundation of this rejection was very different). Woodrow Wilson might reject socialism and coloured equality in his own country, but he still considered it a natural American perspective to reject imperialism, and defend the right to national self-determination (as set down in his famous Fourteen Points of January 1918).

The rejection of the very idea of 'empire' was in part enhanced by the end of World War I, as the breakup of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires released a swathe of new countries, leading the British politician Leo Amery to use a phrase that has since become commonplace: *Balkanisation*.⁶ The British and French saw the outcome of World War I as a chance to develop their own imperial interests, given the collapse of their rivals, but in retrospect it is clear that once the de-legitimisation of the empires had first begun there was no way back. The gradual disintegration of the French and British Empires in the middle decades of the twentieth century stands testament to that interpretation.

⁶ L. Amery, 'The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jan, 1930).

--Normalisation, Imperial Federation, and International Organisations--

In the middle ground between the extremes of the hardliners and the anti-imperialists, there was fertile ground for ideas to develop about how empires might evolve into some new form or organisation suitable for the 20th century. A common feature in many of these ideas was recognition that the factors shaping the development of British Empire had been gradually changing since the American Revolution, and that ignoring those changes—as did hardliners like Churchill—would achieve nothing but a series of revolutions that would tear the Empire apart. Acknowledging this development was generally understood to imply accepting that relations between Britain and the Dominions had changed and had to be reformulated to take into account the fact that the Dominions were now fully self-governing states. There was also a growing (though by no means universal) acceptance of the principle that the colonies and coloured peoples of the Empire should be considered on the path to political maturity and self-government.

Three main lines of thought in this area can be distinguished within this broad area: federalism, internationalism, and a third strain that is hard to name but might simply be called the modern imperialism. The modern imperialists included people like Leo Amery, Conservative Secretary of the Colonial and Dominions Offices from 1924-29. They acknowledged that the dynamics of empire had changed, and that it was necessary to acknowledge such change, but although they welcomed (at least in theory) the Dominions as new partners in the Empire, rather than colonies, the new imperialists saw no reason to change their fundamental understanding of the Empire. They instead believed that adjusting bureaucracy and law to match the present incarnation of the Empire, while encouraging close ties and trade between the

constituent parts, would be sufficient to maintain the coherence and strength of the British Empire.

Many of these 'modernists' preferred as few formal changes as possible, as they considered the fluidity of the "unwritten British Constitution" its greatest asset and a main reason why the Empire had survived so long, in spite of having so many different and almost incompatible parts.⁷ According to this line of thought, the main practical innovations should be to strengthen the lines of communications through Imperial Conferences and other forms of personal contacts in order to strengthen intra-imperial bonds. An indication of the conservatism inherent in this line of thought is, perhaps, that Amery, who oversaw the Imperial Conference of 1926 and its definition of Dominion status, continued to favour the use of the term 'Empire' over 'Commonwealth' well into the 1930s.⁸

One challenge to this approach to the developing empire was the call for Imperial Federation that started in the late nineteenth century. Duncan Bell's *The Idea of Greater Britain* (2007) explores the development of the federation movement and the ways the concept of a "greater Britain" was used by federalists and others. Bell's work is helpful in putting the developments of the early twentieth century in perspective.⁹ Imperial federation found its last strong proponents in the Round Table movement, founded by Lionel Curtis, Philip Kerr and the rest of the so-called 'Milner's Kindergarten'. Several good examinations of the Round Table movement

⁷ M.A. Ebbesen, 'United Empire: Intellectual Reflections on the Commonwealth Idea in the 20th Century' (unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Lancaster University, 2001).

⁸ See for example Amery, 'The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea', pp. 1-22, or his memoirs, L. Amery, *My Political Life* (London, 1953).

⁹ D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain. Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

already exist,¹⁰ but in brief it was founded by a group of friends from Oxford, who served together in Milner's administration in South Africa as it prepared for setting up the Union of South Africa. Spurred by their experience, they decided to create a study group to encourage the broader study of 'the problem of the Commonwealth', which culminated in Curtis's 1916 book of the same name. The book was originally to be published on behalf of the entire Round Table group, but as full agreement on its conclusions could not be reached, it was agreed to let Curtis publish his ideas in his own name.

While the Round Table movement stated its focus as 'the problem of the Commonwealth' in a broad sense, the founders started from the assumption that federation was the answer. The 'problem' posed by the Empire, as far as the Round Table group was concerned, was that the Dominions had become nations in their own right, with interests of their own, and to a certain degree individual cultural traits and concerns: South Africa had to consider the Afrikaners just as Canada had the *Francophonie*. As a result, a simple imperial model could no longer be considered sufficient and a new model was needed. Looking to the lost colony of the United States of America, the obvious solution appeared to be some form of Imperial Federation, which would allow Britain and the Dominions to be independent and yet united at the same time. However, as the group delved into the details of federation, it quickly became clear they could not agree on how to settle the practical details, such as electing an imperial parliament or dealing with the coloured vote when colonies reached Dominion status. Given these issues, the idea of imperial federation was dropped by many of its original proponents before the outbreak of World War 1,

¹⁰ J. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement* (University of Toronto Press, 1975), L. Foster, *High Hopes. The Men and Members of the Australian Round Table* (University of Melbourne Press, 1986).

although the idea of federation nevertheless survived to be discussed fitfully. During the Interwar Period, Philip Kerr raised the issue of federation again, suggesting the federation of all countries into a world state rather than simply imperial federation.¹¹

The third line of thought among the 'middle ground' thinkers—and the one that is central to this thesis—is that of imperialist-internationalism.¹² This line developed partly alongside the idea of imperial federation, partly as its successor, as its proponents took a different approach to reconciling the emerging independence of the Dominions with the collaboration of the whole Empire. Rather than call for a federal structure, the imperialist-internationalists proposed a completely new 'take' on the Empire, by suggesting that it was no longer an Empire at all, but rather an international organisation that had arisen out of the Empire of the nineteenth century.

In this perspective, the change from Empire to international organisation was, at least as regards Britain and the Dominions, a *fait accompli* rather than a goal. According to the perspective of the imperialist-internationalists, any external analysis of the intra-imperial relations at Dominion-Britain level would find that they resembled the relations between cooperating independent countries, rather than those between mother country and colonies. It was in other words the kind of relationship that pertained to an international organisation rather than an empire (whatever the actual name). On those grounds, they concluded that the very name 'Empire' was misleading and needed to change leading, among other suggestions, to a call for the Empire being to be renamed the British Commonwealth of Nations. By declaring that the British

¹¹ A. Bosco, 'Lord Lothian and the Federalist Critique of National Sovereignty' in P. Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis* (Clarendon, 1995), pp. 247-276.

¹² The formulation imperialist-internationalism is the authors own term. However, the connection between imperialism and internationalism in early IR theory is discussed in D. Long and B.C. Schmidt (ed.s), *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (State University of New York Press, 2005).

Empire was already a new kind of international organisation, the imperialist-internationalists were able to focus on how to make the Commonwealth more successful, rather than on spending time trying to convince people to create it. It also allowed them to think creatively about what the Commonwealth could be a model for rather than focus on what it was modelled on.

It is as noted above this group of imperialist-internationalists who are the focal centre of this thesis. Their existence as a group and the group's principal members are described in the following section. It is worth noting that in spite of the originally close connections between the idea of imperial federation and world federation on the one hand, and the British Commonwealth and the League of Nations on the other, they nevertheless represent significantly different approaches to the challenge of peaceful cooperation. Ultimately, the federal idea is based on the constituent parts not being fully independent, but rather all committed to one Imperial or Universal Government, while the idea of international organisations is based on fully independent states cooperating under an aegis of an institution that can only in an attenuated sense be said to wield Imperial or Universal governance.

1.2 Framing the group 'the imperialist-internationalists':

The original interest in this research was shaped by Duncan Hall's 1920 book *The British Commonwealth of Nations*,¹³ with its idealistic, though by no means utopian, ideas for the development of the Empire into Commonwealth. Its approach prompted the author to look for other thinkers who shared his modern liberal attitude towards the peoples of the various constituent parts of the Empire and similarly believed that the best future for them lay inside a reformed Empire. It was clear in Hall's *British*

¹³ D. Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (Methuen, 1920).

Commonwealth that he thought that the contemporary development of the new League of Nations was closely connected to the Empire and the Commonwealth movement. Its final chapter was indeed on 'The British Group and the League of Nations' with one section entitled "The British Commonwealth as the Model of the League".¹⁴ Hall himself went on to work for the League of Nations during the 1920s. Clearly, in the mind of this young Australian-born academic, the Empire/Commonwealth and the League of Nations were intrinsically connected.

Duncan Hall's principal source for his 1920 volume was Jan Smuts, and close investigation shows that Hall gave a fair account of his views.¹⁵ Smuts, as will be discussed in detail later, was a main proponent of the League and the Commonwealth, and his ideas are so articulate and clearly formulated that it leaves some doubt as to whether Hall's own 1920 book can be considered truly independent. In order to identify other like-minded individuals, as part of this research an effort was made to identify the names of delegates from the various Empire or Dominion delegations who worked for one of the various secretariats in the League of Nations. Having established the identity of a group of people who were sufficiently interested in the League to work for it, it was then necessary to establish whether they were equally interested in the development of the Empire/Commonwealth, as shown by membership in the Round Table group or some similar group. It became clear that a number of them were.

Alfred Zimmern, a classicist turned early international relations theorist, worked for the Foreign Office and helped prepare the British proposal for the League of Nations.

¹⁴ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 329-371.

¹⁵ M.A. Ebbesen, 'Rule Australia: Australian Imperialists on the Development of Dominion Autonomy 1910-1927' (Cand.Mag. Dissertation, University of Copenhagen, 2002), p. 73.

Gilbert Murray, a fellow classicist, did work for the League of Nations Union and had stints as a delegate for South Africa in the League of Nations in the mid-1920s. Both men approached the study of international relations influenced by their understanding of the classical past. Thus, a core of a vaguely defined group was established: Smuts, the South African general and statesman, who had a wide audience both popularly and politically, making his ideas for the development of Commonwealth and League of Nations a leading influence in the official formulation of both. Zimmern, the classicist turned internationalist, whose work academically and politically focussed both on the Empire/Commonwealth and on the League. Murray, Australian born, but for most practical purposes English, was the dominant classicist Oxford don of his time, friend and correspondent of Smuts, colleague of Zimmern, and a leading public academic voicing his general opinions and support for the League in all types of political and popular media available. Hall, meanwhile, represented an example of how these ideas were synthesised by a young man and published in a very readable format that Smuts himself would come to refer to.

Beyond this core group more people of interest can be identified. Robert Cecil was in charge of the British Empire Delegation for negotiating the League of Nations and was responsible for bringing Zimmern's work (the so-called Cecil Draft) to Paris. With the exception of his lack of any notable classics education, Cecil fitted seamlessly into the general if vaguely-defined group of imperialist-internationalists. So too did some other figures including Edward Grey, Murray's co-founder of the League of Nations Union, as well as H.A.L. Fisher, Murray's fellow student from Oxford and collaborator at the Board of Education. Conversely, while Leo Amery appeared to share many, if not all the traits of the core group of imperial-internationalists, including a detached relationship with the Round Table movement,

his correspondence with Smuts makes it clear that he did not believe in the League of Nations. Nevertheless, given his strong interest and involvement in the debates about the development of the Empire into Commonwealth during in the 1920s, he remains an interesting counterpoint, helping to define the character of the group.

What is clear, then, is that the internationalist-imperialists did not represent a completely homogenous group with a definite set of shared traits. Rather, it was a group that can be framed, so to speak, through a cluster of traits—of which some members had all, while others only displayed some, though sufficient to 'fit in'. Without exception, all members of the group personally knew at least some of the other members, and in most cases they were directly or indirectly linked through education, personal relations or political, academic, or voluntary work to a majority of the rest of the group. A common tendency to relate both the British Empire and the idea of the League of Nations to a long European tradition of both historical events and political philosophy, makes an investigation into their education background particularly relevant to understanding their approach to international and intra-imperial relations.

Collectively then, the following cluster of traits dominates:

- Most of the imperialist-internationalists considered here were born in the 1860s-1870s, a scope that can even be narrowed further down to a concentration from 1865-75 for a very significant part of the group. A few were a whole generation younger than the majority, but none were born later than the early 1890s.
- Most members of the group had at least part of their education at Oxford, where the Hegelian philosophy of T.H. Green dominated, challenging young

men to take up public service to better society. Many spent part of their working life connected to Oxford as well. A majority studied classics, but law was also common, and those who studied in the Dominions tended to favour law and modern history. The choice of classics is in itself not very significant, as classics was a core part of common curriculum, but the way they interpreted the classical history and philosophy in their own work is significant, so their educational landscape is analysed in chapter three.

- Most of the group of imperialist-internationalists had an active involvement in the League of Nations, either shaping the British policies for the Peace conference, representing the Empire or Dominions as delegates, or working in the League of Nations secretariats during the 1920s. In addition to this, most also wrote pamphlets, articles and newspaper contributions supporting the League.
- Most of the group were politically liberal, though some of the outliers were conservative or socialist.
- Most of the imperialist-internationalists considered here were politically active beyond their League of Nations engagement at both national and imperial level, but only Smuts reached the top ranks in politics.
- Many of the members of the group had shown interest in the Round Table Movement (which was itself inspired by Green) and its investigations into imperial federation and other ways forward for the Empire.
- Many had a career that spanned over at least two parts of the Empire, or one part of the Empire and the USA, 'the lost colony'.

This group of individuals would not have self-identified as a coherent group, but through their collaboration and correspondence they undoubtedly influenced one

another, sharing certain ideas about how the British Empire could serve as a model for the League of Nations. And, given that members of the group all occupied positions of influence, their importance was significantly greater than their numbers might suggest in helping to shape British policy towards the League of Nations.

1.3 Main members

With a 'group' identified by a cluster of traits rather than clearly defined borders of membership, there must inevitably be some argument about whether particular individuals were members or not. Equally, although all were active in the public sphere, not all were equally influential, with the result that a few central members dominated the conversation at the time (and indeed form the focus of this work). This section of the chapter develops somewhat fuller biographies of the key figures introduced above. The leading triumvirate of members was without doubt composed of Smuts, Murray and Zimmern, who each played a central role in defining and influencing the conversation about the developments of the Empire into the Commonwealth and its potential significance for the creation of the League of Nations.

Jan Christiaan Smuts appears a very complex figure when viewed from a modern perspective: an Afrikaner general turned British war hero and leading proponent of the Empire/Commonwealth; a visionary who shaped both the League of Nations and the United Nations but also helped to create the South African Apartheid system; and a man who was dedicated both to science and to holistic religion. Yet despite Smuts' importance, a review of the scholarly research of the past 20 years—that is since the

end of the Apartheid era—reveals surprisingly little new material.¹⁶ Smuts has been, if not forgotten, then pushed aside in what may reflect both scholarly unease at focusing on such a complex and controversial figure as well as the more mundane fact that his archives are not easy to access.

Born in 1870, Smuts studied Literature and Science in the Cape Colony followed by Law at Cambridge, passing examinations with honours in 1895. He went on to a career in law and politics, getting his first significant position in the South African Republic in 1898 as State Secretary of Law and Order. From that point onwards, Smuts was a key figure in South African politics until 1949, holding positions of progressing importance, until he became Prime Minister on his return to South Africa after the Paris Peace conference (his political career was only broken by his exclusion from government from 1924-1933). In three major wars—the second South African War, World War I, and World War II—he combined his political roles with active military service, first as an Afrikaner general, and ultimately as a British Field Marshall. He was a leading figure in the peace negotiations as an Afrikaner after the second South African War, and later as a member of the British Empire delegation and representative of South Africa at the Paris Peace Conference. During World War I, he also served as a member of the British War Cabinet. While in London in 1917 he began promoting the Commonwealth as the future of the British Empire, and—in the same speeches—laid the ground for his later proposals for the League of Nations.

By the end of the War, Smuts was increasingly clear about his ideas for the future of both the League of Nations and the Empire (and was hugely influential on British debates about the League). As Prime Minister of South Africa, Smuts continued

¹⁶ An exception is A. Lentin, *General Smuts: South Africa* (Haus, 2010), which is, however, a fairly short introduction to Smuts.

actively shaping both the League, as well as the future form of the Commonwealth, through his participation in the Imperial Conferences. His ouster from government in 1924 was regretted in London precisely because of his dedication to the Commonwealth idea, and his consequent absence was considered a loss at the Imperial Conference of 1926, where Dominion Status was finally determined. Smuts' career revived after 1933, when for six years he served as deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, before finally resuming the position of Prime Minister from 1939-48. He lived only two more years after leaving office, honoured as Chancellor of Cambridge University.¹⁷

Access to the Smuts Papers is difficult for the simple reason that they are located in Pretoria and to date have not been digitised. A common approach among scholars is to use the great compilation *Selections from the Smuts Papers* by Keith Hancock¹⁸, which along with his two-volume *Smuts* biography¹⁹ remain the authoritative sources for any scholar working on Smuts. However, while access to Smuts' own papers is complicated geographically, much of his correspondence can be found in the archives of his correspondents, many of whom have their papers in Great Britain. Among others, lengthy correspondence can be found in the Gilbert Murray and Leo Amery papers. Also, of course, many of Smut's speeches were printed in newspapers such as *The Times* and can be accessed in their published version.

Gilbert Murray was a complex man of a completely different type than Smuts, with whom he established a close friendship and frequent correspondence. Born in Sydney, in 1866, Murray moved to England with his mother while still a child and

¹⁷ 'Smuts', in *DNB*.

¹⁸ W. K. Hancock and J. van der Poel (ed.s), *Selections from the Smuts papers*, 7 vols. (1966-73).

¹⁹ W. K. Hancock, *Smuts*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1962-8).

stayed in Britain to the end of his days, so in a practical sense was very much an Englishman, albeit one with connections to Australia. He studied classics at St. John's College Oxford, finishing his degrees in 1887, and went on to spend ten years as Professor of Greek at Glasgow University. After a nine-year hiatus he became Professor of Greek at Oxford University in 1908, ensuring his reputation as the greatest classicist of his day. His social position had been secured when he married Lady Mary Howard and became associated with the English aristocracy, which connected him to much of the English establishment, including Bertrand Russell, a cousin of his wife, who became a regular correspondent of Murray. George Bernard Shaw used Murray as the inspiration for one of the main characters in his play *Major Barbara*. In spite of his connections, Murray was unsuccessful when he stood for parliament at various times in the 1920s as a Liberal, but he remained a persistent political activist, who wrote regularly to any ministry that he thought might benefit from his comments.

Murray was also an active public commentator, engaging in the debate about World War I and its justification right from its outbreak, surprising many of his pacifist friends by being a staunch supporter of the British war effort. In 1917 he joined H.A.L. Fisher at the Board of Education, and after the war became co-founder and vice-president of the League of Nations Union, where he collaborated for years with Robert Cecil. In January and early February 1919, Murray was part of Lord Cecil's Advisory Committee, which was intended to support Cecil's work negotiating the League of Nations Covenant in Paris.²⁰ In spite of not having had much chance to affect the proceedings, Murray's part in the Committee shows Cecil's trust in his

²⁰ FO 698/243, ff.35-40A.

opinions. Smuts became acquainted with the Murrays during his stay in England, and their correspondence shows strong evidence of mutual respect. At the request of Smuts, Murray represented South Africa as its delegate at the League of Nations from 1922-23 when Robert Cecil was no longer able to do so, and he also served on the League of Nations Committee of Intellectual Co-operation from 1922 (and as chairman from 1928-1939). Like Smuts, Murray kept his faith in the international project after the fall of the League of Nations and played an important role in the United Nations Association after World War II. In spite of a clear latent racism, he rejected the mistreatment of the coloured people in the colonies and, unlike Smuts, recognised and supported the opinions of Ghandi. Because of his increasing public and political engagement, Murray resigned his professorship in 1936, dedicating his time to the internationalist project until his death in 1957.²¹

Murray's Papers are kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and his published opinions can be traced through numerous articles, pamphlets and opinion pieces in papers such as *The Times*. In recent years, as discussed in the literature review, scholars like Peter Wilson have begun to reassess Murray's ideas, as part of a broader challenge to E.H. Carr's dismissive treatment of the internationalist idealists of the Interwar Period²² (a group of which Murray has typically been considered part and is still treated as such in books like Jeanne Morefield's *Swords without Covenants*).²³

²¹ 'Gilbert Murray', *DNB*.

²² C. Stray (ed), *Gilbert Murray Reassessed* (OUP, 2007), P. Wilson, 'Gilbert Murray and International Relations: Hellenism, liberalism, and international intellectual cooperation as a path to peace', *Review of international studies*, 2011, Vol.37 (2), pp. 881-909, Wilson, P. 'The myth of the First Great Debate', *Review of International Studies*, 1998, Vol.24(5), pp.1-16, Riemens, M., 'International academic cooperation on international relations in the interwar period: the International Studies Conference', *Review of International Studies*, 2011, Vol.37(2), pp. 911-928, Ashworth, L.M., 'Where are the idealists in interwar International Relations?', *Review of International Studies*, 2006, Vol.32(2), pp.291-308, E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939* (1st ed. 1939).

²³ J. Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

Murray's fellow classicist, Alfred Zimmern, was the younger man of the two, born in 1879 in Surrey. He studied classics and letters at New College Oxford, finishing his degree in 1901. From 1902-09 he was a lecturer in ancient history at New College, after which he took two years off for independent travel in Greece and for writing up his main classical work, *The Greek Commonwealth*. It was during his years as lecturer that his interest in international affairs first began, prompted by the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War, and after the publication of the *Greek Commonwealth*, Zimmern went into the Board of Education (1912-15), rather than return to teaching classics. In the latter part of World War I, Zimmern joined the Civil Service (1917-19), first in the Ministry of Reconstruction and political intelligence, then in the Foreign Office, where he wrote the first version of the Cecil Draft, the British proposal at the Peace Conference for the creation of the League of Nations,²⁴ and as previously mentioned, he joined Murray on Cecil's Advisory Committee in London in January 1919. By that stage it was quite clear that he had left his classics career behind him—though he continued to publish revised editions of *The Greek Commonwealth*—and he accepted the position as the world's first professor of international relation at the University of Aberystwyth where he stayed for two years. During the 1920s, he tried to advance international cooperation through lecturing at Cornell University (1922-23), running a summer school of international relations in Geneva from 1924, and participating in the League of Nations' Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (1926-30). From 1930-44, Zimmern became professor of international relations at Oxford, and after World War II he continued his internationalist work as director and advisor to the UNESCO from its founding in 1945 until his death in

²⁴ The full text of Zimmern's proposal can be found in A. Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* (Russell & Russell, 1936, 2nd ed. 1939), pp. 197-209.

1957. From 1947 he was also academically affiliated to the University of Connecticut, and he lived his last years in the United States.

Throughout his career as an internationalist, Zimmern published prolifically including titles such as *The Third British Empire* (1926)²⁵ and *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* (1936),²⁶ both of particular interest here since they tie together his interest in the Empire and the League of Nations while drawing occasional parallels to the ancient world. He was among the co-founders of Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) which published a significant number of his articles. At Chatham House, he cooperated with Arnold Toynbee, Gilbert Murray's son-in-law, and another classicist turned internationalist.²⁷ Like Murray, Zimmern was among the internationalists whom E.H. Carr charged with utopianism in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Little recent research can be found on him, except in Morefield's *Covenants without Swords* and Mazower's *No Enchanted Palace* along with a few other articles (these works, none of which take a very fresh approach to Zimmern, are discussed below).²⁸ Zimmern's papers are held at the Bodleian.

Outside of this core triumvirate, there existed a host of other associates, each of whom have something to add to the group and the research. The most significant of these

²⁵ A. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1926).

²⁶ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* (1936).

²⁷ 'Zimmern', *DNB*, D. McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-48* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 31-33.

²⁸ M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton 2008), Morefield, *Covenants without Swords* (2005), Peatling, J.K., 'Globalism, Hegemonism and British Power: J. A. Hobson and Alfred Zimmern Reconsidered', *History*, 2004, Vol.89 (295), pp. 381-398, Rich, P., 'Reinventing Peace: David Davies, Alfred Zimmern and Liberal Internationalism in Interwar Britain', *International Relations*, 2002, Vol.16(1), pp. 117-133, P. Rich, 'Alfred Zimmern's cautious idealism: the League of Nations, international education and the commonwealth', *Thinkers of the twenty years' crisis: inter-war idealism reassessed*, ed. D. Long and P. Wilson (1995), Markwell, D.J., 'Sir Alfred Zimmern revisited: fifty years on', *Review of International Studies*, 1986, Vol.12(4), pp. 279-292.

was Lord Robert Cecil who represented the most political wing of the group. Born in 1864, Cecil was the younger cousin of Arthur Balfour (born 1848), and a close contemporary of Viscount Grey (born 1862), whom he met at Oxford where they both studied law and finished with modest degrees in the early 1880s. After university, Cecil spent most of his early years developing his career as a lawyer before being elected MP for the Conservative Party in 1906. In 1915 Cecil entered the government as Undersecretary in the Foreign Office, serving first under Grey for a year, then under Balfour after Grey's resignation. Cecil dedicated himself to the establishment of the League of Nations from 1916 onwards and in 1919 Cecil led the British Delegation at the Peace Conference on League related issues, bringing with him the Cecil Draft that Zimmermann had helped to prepare.

From the 1920s onwards, Cecil showed increasingly Liberal sympathies though he remained a Conservative. Against the UK Government wishes, but on the invitation of Smuts, Cecil represented South Africa at the League of Nations Assembly from 1920-22,²⁹ and through the twenties cooperated closely with Gilbert Murray in the League of Nations Union, as well as with Grey and Balfour in more honorary positions as Presidents.³⁰ Grey focussed on promoting international cooperation down until his death in 1933, while Balfour became the leading statesmen of intra-imperial cooperation at the Imperial Conferences of the 1920s until his death in 1930. Cecil continued to work for the League of Nations Union and the International Peace

²⁹ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51076 ff. 94-111. Correspondence between Cecil and Smuts, December 1920-July 1922 on the topic of Cecil representing South Africa at the League and possible objections from the British Government. Also FO 371/5478 f. 197 and f. 199 show some of the objections internally raised against Cecil representing South Africa.

³⁰ Evidence of their collaboration can be found in the League of Nations Union archives, held at the London School of Economics Library. LNU/1 and LNU/2/2 contains the minutes of the General Council and the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union, which shows the regular attendance of Cecil and Murray at the meetings, as well as the occasional involvement of Smuts and Zimmermann. FO 800/400 f. 67 is an official letter from Murray to Balfour, dated 27 November 1918, thanking him for accepting the position as honorary president of the League of Nations Union.

Campaign until World War II, in spite of the League's failing popularity, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in 1936. In 1946 he participated in the final session of the League, ending his speech with "the League is dead; long live the United Nations". He became honorary president of the United Nations Association and continued working for international peace until his death in 1958.³¹ Cecil's papers are held in the Western Manuscripts Collection at the British Library.

Another politician on the fringes of the group that forms the focus of this research was Leo Amery. Born in India in 1873, Amery studied classics and letters at Balliol College Oxford, finishing his degree in 1896, after which he specialised in the study of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. He also worked for a time in South Africa (1899-1902) for *The Times*, later writing a history of the South African Wars, before becoming a Conservative MP in 1911. He remained in parliament until 1945. During his years in South Africa he was introduced to Lord Milner and his famous "Kindergarten", thereby associating himself with the Round Table Movement, although he found many of its ideas on imperial federation unrealistic and never formally joined. During World War I, Amery's expertise in the Balkans was used by the embryonic intelligence services, and he became assistant secretary from 1916-1918 to Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the War Cabinet). In 1919 Amery was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary to Milner in the Colonial Office, then in 1921 appointed Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, before serving as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1922-23. He then served as Colonial

³¹ 'Cecil, Lord Robert', 'Grey, Edward', and 'Balfour, Arthur James' in *DNB*. Cecil quoted as written in the *DNB* entry.

Secretary 1924-29, and Dominions Secretary 1925-29. He returned to government in 1940 as Secretary of the India Office until 1945.³²

Throughout his career Amery was dedicated to the development of the British Empire, and was deeply engaged in developing intra-imperial relations, and therefore has some of the traits that align him with the group that forms the base of the present research. However, Amery did not believe in the idea of the League of Nations and, in that essential respect his ideas clearly differed from those of men like Smuts and Zimmern. He is nevertheless discussed in this work, specifically in chapter 5, as his ideas show how even such a sceptic as Amery believed that the British Empire could help to provide a model for the League. Amery's papers are located in the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, and among his more important publications are his memoirs, published as *My Political Life*, as well as his many articles for *The Times*.

The final figure to be introduced here is Duncan Hall, whose *British Commonwealth of Nations*, as mentioned earlier, prompted the author's original interest in this whole topic. Born in 1891 in New South Wales, he represents the youngest generation in the group. He completed his degree in modern history at the University of Sydney in 1915, after which he enrolled at Oxford University. He apparently never joined the war effort either in Australia or in England, possibly because he was exempt from conscription as an Australian or as an enrolled student. He was an active socialist during the War with connections to the Fabian Society, which he combined with his studies at Oxford. On the suggestion of the Fabian Society, Hall in May 1917 undertook a research project about the history, present, and future of the British

³² 'Amery, Leo' in *DNB*

Empire,³³ which he presented for his B.Litt. and which was later to be published as *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, in which he argued that the Empire had reached a new stage of development as a Commonwealth, and could itself be used as a model for the League of Nations. It is worth noting that the structure of Hall's final work, strongly resembles the structure of investigation first suggested by the Fabian Society, and several of his reflections are similar to those presented to the Society on the topic.³⁴ In the course of his research, Hall became connected to the Round Table movement, but found the ideas being developed there unconvincing if a helpful stimulus to his own thinking. Nevertheless, he acknowledged their help in the preface and the *Round Table* journal in its turn gave a positive review of his work.³⁵

Although *The British Commonwealth of Nations* gained some political recognition after its publication, particularly with Smuts and Amery, Hall did not realise the influence of his book. Since he could not find work in Britain, he returned to Australia, working as a tutor at the University of Sydney. In 1926-27 he became professor of international relations at Syracuse University, New York, after which he spent the next 12 years working in the League of Nations Secretariat, first for the Control of Opium trade, then for the Information section (specialising in the British Dominions). From the beginning of World War he worked in the United States in various academic positions, continuing as an independent scholar after his retirement in 1955 until his death in 1976. Hall kept returning to the topic of the British Commonwealth throughout his life, reusing his 1920 title for two articles written in

³³ Bernard Shaw Papers, Add MS 50681, f. 168. Report of the Empire Reconstruction Committee, 18 May 1917.

³⁴ Bernard Shaw Papers, Add MS 50681, ff. 168-197. Papers related to the Empire Reconstruction Committee, May 1917- July 1919.

³⁵ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. XI; 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', *Round Table*, XI, No. 41, 1920, p. 9.

1927 and 1953 respectively, while his final *opus magnum* was simply called *Commonwealth* when published in 1971. Ironically, it was only while preparing his final work that he learnt of the impact of his original 1920 publication.³⁶ Hall's papers can be found in the National Library of Australia, and his rather modest production of relevant books and articles is easily available.

1.4 The many origins of the League of Nations and the rise of New Diplomacy

Just as there were many concepts of 'empire' in the early twentieth century, there were also many ideas for a League of Nations circulating when World War I finally ended with Armistice in November 1918. Not only did various politicians and academics discuss ideas for a future league, but across the United States, Great Britain, France, and other countries, societies and associations calling for a league arose encouraging a public debate and interest in the idea of a league of nations to protect the world from war in the future.

Nevertheless, it is hardly too much to say, that in popular knowledge, it is Woodrow Wilson and his Fourteen Points that loom large as the basis for creating the League. The standard story of the origins of the League, at least in popular parlance, is probably that Wilson formulated the Fourteen Points, came to Europe and created the League of Nations, and went back to the United States, only to find that he couldn't get the necessary support for the States to join his own invention. This narrative makes the League essentially Wilson's baby, that he was forced to abandon and leave to be reared by whoever cared, predominantly the main European powers and Japan.

³⁶ B. H. Fletcher, 'Hall, Hessel Duncan (1891 - 1976)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 14, Melbourne University Press, 1996, pp 356-357, McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision*, pp. 33-36.

That Wilson's importance on the foundation of the League was immense is indisputable, and it is by no means the purpose of this thesis to really challenge this assumption. Wilson's popularity in Europe at the end of the War as well as America's economic and military power meant that the European leaders could not ignore him at the Peace Conference, irrespective of what opinions they might have of Wilson or his ideas.³⁷ As leader of the British delegation negotiating the League of Nations, Robert Cecil came to conclude quite decidedly that "now that I have sat for two or three days with the President [...] I do not personally like him"³⁸, and in his estimate the French considered the whole League of Nations idea "a queer Anglo-Saxon fancy not likely to be of the slightest importance in practice"³⁹. Nevertheless, both Cecil and the French had to pay their respects to Wilson and negotiate their way to a League Covenant that Wilson would accept, not least because of the economic power the U.S.A. held over Europe after years of taking out loans to continue the war effort. Additionally, the fact that men such as Smuts and Cecil were far more dedicated to the League idea than Lloyd George, who as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom ultimately had the dominant voice of the entire British Empire, meant that they were deeply dependent on the sheer tenacity of Wilson to secure that a League of Nations was actually created as a matter of priority at the Peace Conference. In short, Wilson's role in the foundation of the League is well established,⁴⁰ and his papers are now

³⁷ See for example M. Macmillan, *Peacemakers. Six Months that Changed the World* (John Murray, 2001), pp. 11-24 on Wilson's reception in Europe, and R. Henig, *The League of Nations* (Haus, 2010), pp. 1-53 on the origins and negotiation of the League Covenant.

³⁸ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51131, f. 35. Diary of Lord Robert Cecil at the Paris Peace Conference, 6 February 1919.

³⁹ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51131, f. 7. Diary of Lord Robert Cecil at the Paris Peace Conference, 8 January 1919.

⁴⁰ Read for example H. Foley, *Wilson's Case for the League of Nations* (Princeton University Press, 1923), L.E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American diplomatic tradition, the treaty fight in perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

openly available online making them very accessible,⁴¹ although as noted his role is not the focus of this thesis.

In the context of this thesis, it is worth addressing that Wilson's liberal credentials have been challenged based on his blatantly racist opinions. Aligning the Fourteen Points with the American history of segregation, which had Wilson's full support, is obviously challenging for a modern reader. However, a quite recent work by Leonard Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, argues that Wilson was—and certainly would consider himself—a true liberal in spite of his racism, on the premise that liberalism has always been based on equal rights for a select group, making Wilson's idea of national self-determination for white's only logically consistent with the framework of his time.⁴² A similar kind liberalism for white's only occurred in the writings of John Stuart Mill, as shown in chapter two. Smith's interpretation of liberalism in the interwar period, appears to be as relevant to understanding Smuts, as it is to Wilson.

On the other hand, the British role in the creation of the League, while the lesser known story than the American, has not been ignored either. There was in Britain particularly strong support for the league idea, with several competing societies promoting the League, which were merged into the League of Nations Union, at its time the largest popular political society in Britain and a significant lobbying group.⁴³ Seeing the league idea as an essentially liberal-democratic way to secure peace in the future, it appealed to a large segment of the British population as a concept that was

⁴¹ Woodrow Wilson Papers, available at: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/woodrow-wilson-papers/> (23 May 2019).

⁴² L. V. Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁴³ A key work on the League of Nations Union is D.S. Birn, *The League of Nations Union, 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

fundamentally compatible with the British political tradition. Unsurprisingly, the league idea found significant supporters among politicians, who either deeply believed in the idea, or at least considered it a strategic way to engage with public opinion. George Egerton's *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations* and Peter Yearwood's *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Foreign Policy 1914-1925*,⁴⁴ both provide valuable insights into the British contribution to the creation of the League of Nations, not least in regards to the motivations of the British Government, and the dynamics between Robert Cecil, Philip Kerr, and Lloyd George. Yearwood's *Guarantee of Peace*, goes beyond the creation of the League, including the early years of the League, when the Peace Treaties were being adjusted and the League tried to find its legs in an early post-war Europe in particular, at a time when the British Empire was trying to find its own new internal balance in the relationship between Britain and the Dominions. It is in this respect hardly coincidence that *The Guarantee of Peace* covers almost the exact same set of years as this thesis does, in spite of the different foci of the two works; it is simply a very intense period in the history of both League and Empire. Yearwood's focus on British foreign policy, is well complemented by the introduction and first chapter of Patricia Clavin's *Securing the World Economy* (2013), which analyses the role of world economics in the League and the involvement of the League in managing economic crisis from the creation of the Covenant to 1925,⁴⁵ and by Ruth Henig's *The League of Nations*, which gives a comprehensive history of the League from idea to abolishment.

⁴⁴ G. W. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations. Strategy, Politics, and International Organization, 1914-1919* (University of North Carolina Press, 1978) and P. J. Yearwood's *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Foreign Policy 1914-1925* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁵ P. Clavin, *Securing the World Economy. The reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-46.

While none of these works analyse the angle of imperialist-internationalism, they provide a good framework for understanding both the complexity of the origins of the League, the sheer breadth of issues it was challenged to engage with, and struggles of the early development of the League, after it had officially commenced. That the core history of the League is less debated in the chapters ahead, should not be understood to reflect any dismissal of its importance, nor does it suggest that the subject has been exhausted as an area for research. It simply reflects the wish of this thesis to keep a tight focus on the specific line of thought that imperialist-internationalism represented at a time where a whole range of internationalisms were trying to become a part of common parlance. Where Arno Mayer argued that Wilson and Lloyd George promoted New Diplomacy through the League as a way to prevent Socialist Internationalism from gaining ground popularly,⁴⁶ this thesis contends that the imperialist-internationalists who formed the British proposal for the League of Nations were not simply proponents of liberal internationalism indistinguishable from Wilsonianism, but that they rather supported the notion of a liberal internationalism that had organically grown out of British imperialism –an argument that Wilson would appear much less likely to support.

--*New and Old Diplomacy*--

Key to Wilson's ideas for the League of Nations was the idea of substituting the so-called 'Old Diplomacy' for 'New Diplomacy'. In this conception, Old Diplomacy was dependent of the notion of the Balance of Power between the great powers, and based on the apparatus of each country using its diplomatic corps of Ambassadors and their juniors to negotiate bilateral, often secret, treaties, without much in the way of

⁴⁶ A.J. Mayer, *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918* (Yale University Press, 1959).

democratic influence or oversight. New Diplomacy, however, was to be characterised by negotiations between elected officials, accountable to their legislative assemblies and public opinion, and based in international conferences or, even better, in the League of Nations itself, in agreement with the first of Wilson's Fourteen Points. The fact that Wilson himself deviated from the idea of keeping all proceedings open to public scrutiny already during the creation of the League Covenant at the Paris Peace Conference, where most decisions were made by the great powers anyway, is well known, but his promotion of the principles should be acknowledged all the same. The League did create a new forum of international communication, which changed the possibilities for international cooperation, even if it did not abolish secret diplomacy.

The British approach to New Diplomacy was mixed. Harold Nicolson, a career diplomat from a family of aristocratic career diplomats, who was part of the British delegation, was, perhaps unsurprisingly, sceptical about the value of rejecting the system he was brought up in. In his Chichele Lectures, delivered in November 1953, he argued that the Old Diplomacy, which he called the 'French method', was "best adapted to the conduct of relations between civilized States. It was courteous and dignified; it was continuous and gradual; it attached importance to knowledge and experience; it took account of the realities of existing power; and it defined good faith, lucidity and precision as the qualities essential to any sound negotiation."⁴⁷

While he acknowledged that it was no longer possible to bring back the Old Diplomacy, he made it quite clear that he felt that the principles of Wilson's New Diplomacy were unworkable and that Wilson's acts at the Peace Conference had

⁴⁷ H. Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (Constable and Company, 1954), p. 72.

proved as much, and that New Diplomacy rather exaggerated than solved any of the issues inherent in the Old Diplomacy.⁴⁸

Nicholson's rejection of Wilson's New Diplomacy was shared by many in the Foreign Office and by some British Politicians, not least among the Conservatives, who tended to think of Wilson as dangerously naïve, and his ideas a utopian rejection of the realist basis of the balance of power. Later chapters contrast Amery's disdain for Wilson with the attempts of the imperialist-internationalists to create what they considered was a realist basis for the League.

Because the imperialist-internationalists did not consider New Diplomacy utopian. Arthur Balfour, the former Prime Minister and future grand old man of the settlement of Dominion Status, gave a speech to the Imperial Conference in November 1921, where he defended the works of the League and the value of the New Diplomacy, while accepting the past value of the Old Diplomacy:

I am the last person to deride what is commonly called "The Old Diplomacy." The Old Diplomacy has for many generations done much in the cause of peace, and those who see in it merely a costly method of embittering international relations and snatching national advantages, completely misread the lessons of history. But there are assuredly many things which the League of Nations has even now shown that it can do, which Diplomacy could scarcely attempt, and which it certainly could not attempt with success.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (1954), pp. 73-93. Specific points raised can be found on p.73 and p. 91.

⁴⁹ League of Nations Archives, R1594/40/17581, Printed copy of a speech given by A. Balfour to the Imperial Conference 8 July 1921, p. 3. The League Secretariat kept a separate copy of the speech in IPM/IPB/NIP/102/6, suggesting that it was considered relevant by several departments.

From this point, Balfour moved on to discuss a set of cases in which the League had been involved, generally successfully, and in which Old Diplomacy would have had no way of intervening, such as the illegal trafficking of women, children and arms, the establishment of an International Court of Justice, the involvement in solving the economic problems of the successor states of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, a settlement of the Aaland Islands dispute, and other issues.⁵⁰

This embrace of the League and New Diplomacy as another tool in the box of the internationalist is a fairer reflection of its acceptance among the imperialist-internationalists than imagining them as setting it up as a complete counterpoint to the Old Diplomacy.

1.5 Literature review

Given the nature of the area of research, there is inevitably a fluid line between primary and secondary sources, particularly since so many of the main primary sources are the printed publications by the various members of the group. As David McIntyre's *The Britannic Vision*⁵¹ demonstrates, many historians were indeed important actors in shaping the development of the Commonwealth rather than simply neutral observers *post factum*. To give one example of this process, Keith Hancock, the writer of the authoritative biography of Smuts, found out during his research that Smuts had considered Duncan Hall's 1920 *British Commonwealth of Nations* very inspiring. He passed this on to Hall, who related the fact repeatedly as he wrote to friends about the finishing of his 1971 *Commonwealth*, clearly re-evaluating his own

⁵⁰ League of Nations Archives, R1594/40/17581, Printed copy of a speech given by A. Balfour to the Imperial Conference 8 July 1921, pp. 4-6.

⁵¹ McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision*.

understanding of what had happened back in 1920-1921.⁵² So, should Hall's

Commonwealth of 1971 count as a purely secondary source, since it was written as a history fifty years after the facts, or should we grant it some primary source value as a window into Hall's thoughts about the process? And, if so, how relevant should we consider his much later knowledge of Smuts' interest in his 1920 work? Clearly, such publications fall into a grey zone between primary and secondary.

The situation becomes clearer with publications appearing since the 1970s, because all the original active participants had died, breaking the most tangible link to the thoughts of those who had during the interwar period focused on the creation of the League of Nations and the formation of the Commonwealth. It is therefore reasonable to use 1980 as a watershed that clearly separates the strictly secondary literature from the more uncertain earlier publications. Although much work of value has appeared, none of this new secondary literature really focuses its core attention on the interaction between the parallel processes of the formation of the League of Nations and the development of the Empire into Commonwealth. The present research does not, then, so much seek to challenge any account as propose to fill a gap in the existing research.

-Books-

Three books perhaps come closest to dealing with the parallel development of League and Commonwealth which forms the focus of this thesis: J. Morefield, *Covenants without Swords* (2005), M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace* (2008), and W.D. McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision* (2009).⁵³ Morefield and Mazower examine the

⁵² Ebbesen, 'Rule Australia', p. 74.

⁵³ Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision*.

ideology of some of the individuals who form the focus of this thesis primarily in terms of their involvement with the formation of the League of Nations. McIntyre, as mentioned previously, takes a broad overview of the historians who helped form the idea of the development of Empire into Commonwealth. And yet it is precisely the relationship *between* these two processes which was the focus of the group of imperial-internationalists discussed in this thesis. These three books are discussed further below.

From a different perspective, *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations*, edited by David Long and Brian Schmidt,⁵⁴ analyses the relationship between imperialism and internationalism in the early twentieth century among the founders of International Relations (IR) as an academic discipline. The book argues “that the dual themes of imperialism and internationalism were paramount when the field began to take a recognizable form at the beginning of the twentieth century” and that the relationship between the two was the driving factor for early IR theory rather than “the much discussed realist-idealist debate”.⁵⁵ The most relevant chapter is by Jeanne Morefield, ‘A Liberal in a Muddle’⁵⁶ on Alfred Zimmern, which mainly supports the interpretation of Zimmern offered here. When Morefield argues that “from early on in his career Zimmern argued that his idealized understanding of the British Commonwealth—as a kind of quasi-international government based on a loose, organic confederation of semi-sovereign nations—provided the world with a clear model of what such a community might look like”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Long and Schmidt (ed.s), *Imperialism and Internationalism*.

⁵⁵ Long and Schmidt (ed.s), *Imperialism and Internationalism*, p. 1.

⁵⁶ J. Morefield, ‘A Liberal in a Muddle’ in Long and Schmidt (ed.s), *Imperialism and Internationalism*, pp. 93-115.

⁵⁷ Morefield, ‘A Liberal in a Muddle’, p. 111.

she fully supports the premise of this thesis. However, both her chapter and the book as a whole do not have the breadth of this thesis.

Meanwhile, Ali Parchami's *Hegemonic Peace and Empire* (2009)⁵⁸ focuses on the concept of *Pax* and how it was interpreted and applied by the Roman and British Empires as well as by the United States. Making a convincing case for the *Pax* having to be understood as an armed peace that can only be created by a power holding *Imperium*, Parchami touches on issues deeply relevant to chapter two and three of this thesis, which deal with the concept of Empires as peace creators and the educational background of the imperialist-internationalists. However, as his focus is on the Roman tradition of *Pax*, he only passingly evaluates the Greek impact, while *Hegemonic Peace and Empire* does not in any detail examine the transformation from Empire to Commonwealth or the Empire as a model for the League of Nations.

It is now time to return in more detail to the three books mentioned at the start of this section. McIntyre's *The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Marking of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-1948* has been a very useful work in writing this thesis. The book is split in to three main parts—'Historiography', 'Terminology', and 'Chronology'—and provides an abundance of well researched and clearly formulated entries that allow for a quick overview of 17 historians (or writers of historical literature – some, like Amery, would not normally be considered historians). It also considers a range of questions and terminologies that may be considered relevant to the subject matter here (such as imperial federation or common allegiance to the crown). The topics are well chosen and concisely written, providing a valuable insight into discussion of the ideas about Commonwealth—the *Britannic Vision* of the title.

⁵⁸ A. Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire. The Pax Romana, Britannica, and Americana* (Routledge, 2009).

The arguments given in the two first parts strongly support the notion that historians were not only chroniclers but also sometimes makers of the development of Empire into Commonwealth (it is noticeably one of the few books around that takes Duncan Hall into consideration). The Chronology, however, refers more to Smuts, Borden and the other 'usual suspects' than to the historians discussed in part one and two. Several reviews of *The Britannic Vision* did indeed point this out as a weakness that undermines the premise of the book.⁵⁹

What the *Britannic Vision* covers, it covers well, but although it does briefly mention how Zimmern, Hall and Smuts mention League and Empire/Commonwealth in the same breath,⁶⁰ it does not develop the idea of a connection between the two sets of ideas. It instead focuses on how independent Dominion membership of the League was a manifestation of their increasing autonomy within the Empire/Commonwealth (something rather different). The *Britannic Vision* is particularly interesting for this research because its selection of historians has a significant overlap with the people identified as relevant to this research: Zimmern, Hall and Amery have each their section, one after the other, in the 'Historiography' section.⁶¹ Likewise, the book's frequent references to Smuts matches the connections presented here. And, finally and very significantly, McIntyre does not endorse Carr's critical evaluation of Zimmern in the entry on him, which is a fresh perspective compared to most others as will be shown in the following section.

⁵⁹ B. Marsh, 'The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-48. Review', *British Scholar*, 2010, Vol.3(1), pp.182-185, J. Tosh, 'The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-48. Review', *Rethinking History*, 2012, Vol.16(3), p.462-463, R. Craggs, 'The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-48. Review', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 2010, Vol.36(4), pp. 490-491.

⁶⁰ McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision*, pp. 127-137.

⁶¹ McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision*, pp. 31-37.

Mark Mazower's *No Enchanted Palace*⁶² focuses on the links between liberal imperialism and the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations.

However, since his main focus is on the United Nations, his treatment of the League of Nations is rather brief, in spite of the fact that the liberal imperialists were arguably at their most influential over the creation of the League. It is worth noting that, both in language and assumptions, Mazower seems to be taking a realist approach to the actions and intentions of the early internationalists that Carr had previously identified as idealists and utopians in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

The chapters devoted to the League of Nations reviews the ideology of imperial internationalism through an analysis of the ideas of Jan Smuts and Alfred Zimmern. Mazower argues that the support of imperialists in Britain for the creation of the League of Nations and its successor was to create a framework within which the Empire and colonialism could survive and secure the dominance of Anglophone ideas over the world at large. The latter point is not really controversial. It was certainly a dominant theme in the writings of the imperialist-internationalists that the Anglophone peoples of the world possessed a special genius that made their two bastions, the British Empire and the United States, particularly apt models for the future development of human civilization across the world.

Mazower's first point, however, i.e. that the men like Zimmern believed that the League should secure the future of the Empire and colonialism, is not nearly as strong. While it is true that there was a broad consensus among the imperialist-internationalists that the League would help to secure the future of the Empire-Commonwealth, it is not nearly as clear, with the exception of Jan Smuts, that they

⁶² Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*.

believed it would secure the continuation of colonialism (at least not for more than a limited time). Though Smuts, as Mazower argues, probably was aiming for permanent white leadership in Africa, other leading imperialist-internationalists did not.

Mazower admits that Zimmern did not entirely follow Smuts' ideas for racial segregation, and that segregationist ideas were widely considered abhorrent in Britain, but he nevertheless holds firm to his general proposition. Zimmern, however, in *Third British Empire* specifically argues against dividing humans along colour lines. Indeed he states in the first part of the book that the official pronouncement of the aim of responsible government in India "marks the definite repudiation of the idea that there can be, under the British flag, one form of constitutional evolution for the West and another for the East, or one for the white races and another for the non-white".⁶³ Later on, he approaches the issue from a more emotional angle, criticizing the 'brother-in-law argument', ie that anytime one argues for racial equality one is likely to meet resistance by the way of the question "how would you like your sister to marry such [a] one?" Zimmern's answer is that while he probably wouldn't like it very much, the question is totally irrelevant:

The coloured peoples under the British flag are not asking to be loved by their white fellow citizens. [...] They are only asking for certain ordinary commonplace political and social rights –for justice, for civil equality, for tolerance, and for courtesy.⁶⁴

Other members of the imperialist-internationalist circle shared this view. Duncan Hall made it clear in *The British Commonwealth of Nations* that all colonies and protectorates should be considered to be on the road towards self-government, and with it their own independent place within the British Commonwealth, and thus also

⁶³ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁴ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 86-87.

in the League of Nations. Like virtually all British academics of his time, he conceded that the different colonies were at very different stages of their political development, and would mature only gradually and over a long period, but his desired endpoint was clear: the point when all the colonial populations had matured politically to the point of being capable of independence. This view, arguably more dominant than Smuts' among the imperialist-internationalists outside Africa, implied that the League of Nations was not intended to uphold colonialism indefinitely, but rather to provide a framework where the development from Empire to Commonwealth could continue untroubled, until it reached the point where 'imperialism' was superseded by internationalism.

One point that might admittedly be held in favour of Mazower's theory of permanent colonialism is that even the most idealist-minded of the imperialist-internationalists had their doubts about the ability of some peoples ever to reach the maturity needed for self-government. But most believed that while such a 'lack of maturity' might lead to permanent colonialism, this represented a regrettable failure rather than a desirable aim, and does not support the idea that the aim of the League of Nations was considered by the majority of the imperialist-internationalists to be the establishment of permanent colonialism. All in all, Mazower does argue that Smuts and others used the Empire as a model for the League of Nations, and in that respect several of his points can be used to support the arguments of this work, but because of his focus on the League as a way to preserve white rule and colonialism, *No Enchanted Palace* does not really engage with the perspective developed in this thesis of the Empire being a proto-type international organisation. Simply put, Mazower's work suggests that the League was created in the image of the Empire to save imperialism, while the present work argues that the 'Empire' was seen by some as an international

organisation that could be used as a model to develop the League and further promote internationalism.

While Zimmern and Smuts loom large both in *The Britannic Vision* and *No Enchanted Palace*, one of the first striking things to notice about Morefield's *Covenants without Sword* is that it focuses on the liberal imperialism of Gilbert Murray and Alfred Zimmern while Smuts is nowhere to be found (his name does not even appear in the index). According to Morefield:

The main goal of this book [*Swords without Covenants*], then, is to investigate the dense ideological matrix that made Murray's and Zimmern's simultaneous commitment to an international politics based on the "Fraternity of Mankind" and the conservative attachment to a language of social stasis, nationhood, and empire appear coherent. It seeks to illuminate the internal logic that made it possible for these men to fancy themselves apostles of a radically transformative approach to world politics that required little to no change of the status quo.⁶⁵

With that in mind, the complete absence of any mention of the influence of Jan Smuts becomes puzzling, to say the least. As a frequent correspondent of Murray and a main influence on the Foreign Office policy that Zimmern helped draft, it is hard to see how the goal of understanding the ideology of Murray and Zimmern can be achieved, while leaving out such an important influence. It is not that Morefield is unwilling to discuss other influences or correspondents. The importance of Curtis and Kerr of the Round Table movement, with its strong connections to South Africa, are both considered⁶⁶ It is an omission that cannot easily be explained, unless Morefield really

⁶⁵ Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, pp. 145, 181.

considered Smuts' influence on Murray and Zimmern so irrelevant that it is not worth mentioning. Needless to say such an evaluation of Smuts is not shared by this work.

What *Covenants without Swords* does do, though, is analyse the ideological influences on Murray and Zimmern, with particular attention given to the importance of T.H. Green's Hegelian idealism in shaping the Oxford Liberalism of the late nineteenth century.⁶⁷ *Covenants* also looks at the classicist influence on the political ideas of Murray and Zimmern—just as *No Enchanted Palace* tries to incorporate Zimmern's classicist background as an explanation for his ideas—though it misjudges the degree to which they differed from some of their 19th century predecessors such as George Grote.⁶⁸

In theory, Morefield's book ought to be of great relevance to this thesis, not least to chapter 3 on the education of the group, but it is rather tendentious in its attempt to squeeze Murray and Zimmern into a predetermined mould. There is an assumption that Murray and Zimmern presented themselves as egalitarian, and anti-imperialist utopians, concealing an elitist, conservative imperialism underneath the public façade. That position, however, is a straw man. Murray and Zimmern certainly were elitist,⁶⁹ though with a strong sense of social responsibility, and they were to varying degrees imperialist. They also openly admitted that their education had been touched by Hegelian influences. They did not believe, though, that such attributes were in conflict with a commitment to a (fairly) liberal internationalist perspective.

⁶⁷ A much less specialised look at Green's influence can be found in R. Symonds, *Oxford and empire: the last lost cause?* (Macmillan, 1986).

⁶⁸ The importance of Grote for interpretation of the Athenian Democracy in the nineteenth century is explained in chapter three.

⁶⁹ Zimmern, for instance, argued in his "brother-in-law argument" previously mentioned, that he wouldn't like his sister to marry a working class man either! Zimmern, *Third British Empire*, pp. 86-87

As Morefield makes clear throughout her book, *Covenants* is written in many respects as a clarification of Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis*, agreeing with many of Carr's points but disagreeing with 'his simplification of the liberal paradigm'.⁷⁰ This starting point means that the entire book is angled to agree or disagree with Carr, and her 'straw man' assumptions about Murray and Zimmern probably arose from that particular starting point. While *Covenants* certainly has its value as a history book, it is also firmly situated within the framework of the 'International Relations' debate about the inter-war period started by Carr which continues to this day. The book does indeed seek to bring the debate up to the present, with a final section on the relevance to several modern internationalists and the debate after September 11th.⁷¹

While there are many interesting perspectives in *Covenants*, it does not really tie together the complex and related development of the League and the Commonwealth in the minds of men like Murray and Zimmern (which of course it never set out to do). Nor does it fully credit the liberal approach on questions of race expressed by Murray and Zimmern, given its premise that both men ultimately favoured a system that would not much challenge the status quo. In this respect, *Covenants* shares a basic outlook with *No Enchanted Palace* and it is indeed striking that *Covenants* was used by Mazower as one of the sources for his chapter on Zimmern. The idea that the League was a tool designed to maintain the international status quo appears to the author of this thesis to stem in part from applying a realist interpretation to liberal thoughts and actions (in a sense not taking the associated values seriously). This does not mean that the thesis will support Carr's notion that the imperialist-internationalists were utopians, but it does mean that it considers the whole status quo argument as

⁷⁰ Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, p. 3.

⁷¹ Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, pp. 221-30.

based on a misunderstanding of the ideas behind the League articulated by men like Zimmern and Murray.

1.6 Carr and the Interwar thinkers

“Englishmen do not regard politics as an end in themselves. They are not Utopians. They do not dream of the British Empire as an instalment of the perfect state.”⁷² Thus wrote Zimmern in an article on Britain and the League of Nations, published in France in 1928, apparently rejecting the ideas of political Utopianism.

As the discussion of *Covenants without Swords* has already shown, E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939*⁷³ is still considered relevant to the discussion of Gilbert Murray, who is not specifically attacked by the book, and Alfred Zimmern, who was one of Carr's main targets. A quick perusal of recent scholarship on Zimmern and Murray shows that Morefield is not alone in broadly sharing Carr's perspective. It instead appears a main theme in much scholarship on these interwar thinkers.⁷⁴ This section therefore examines in more detail Carr's attack on the inter-war thinkers he condemned as 'utopian', an attack that included but was not limited to the circle of imperial-internationalists that are the focus of this research.

Carr himself was, like Hall, a generation younger than Murray, Zimmern and Smuts. And, as was the case with a number of the imperialist-internationalists, he had a very multifaceted career, starting out as a clerk in the Foreign Office in 1914, eventually

⁷² A. Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations' in A. Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy* (Chatto & Windus, 1929), p. 280. Article first published in *L'Année Politique française et étrangère*, 1928.

⁷³ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (2nd ed. 1946)

⁷⁴ Markwell, 'Sir Alfred Zimmern Revisited', pp. 279-292; P. Wilson, et al., *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis. Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Clarendon, 1995); Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', pp. 1-16; P. Wilson, 'Retrieving Cosmos: Gilbert Murray's Thought on International Relations' in Stray (ed) *Gilbert Murray Reassessed*, P. Wilson, 'Gilbert Murray and International Relations: Hellenism, liberalism, and international intellectual cooperation as a path to peace', *Review of international studies*, (2011) 37 (2), pp. 881-909.

taking up in 1936 the Chair of International Relations at Aberystwyth previously held by Zimmern.⁷⁵ (It is perhaps not without significance that Murray argued against Carr's appointment in favour of another candidate).⁷⁶ It was during his tenure at Aberystwyth, which lasted till 1947, that *The Twenty Years' Crisis* was written and published. From his early years in the Foreign Office, Carr had learned Russian and become interested in the USSR. From 1946 onwards most of his academic work was on Soviet history, including his fourteen volume *History of Soviet Russia*,⁷⁷ as well as the short essay *What is History?*,⁷⁸ both still recognised as classics by modern historians.⁷⁹

That a book published in 1939 remains a centrepiece of Zimmern/Murray scholarship is probably best explained by two facts. The first is that Carr's condemnation of the interwar thinkers associated with the League of Nations as utopians rang true, given that the League had failed to prevent a new world war by the time it was published. The second and perhaps more significant fact is that *The Twenty Years' Crisis* became a—perhaps even *the*—foundational textbook of International Relations,⁸⁰ with the result that most scholars of the subject will have encountered Carr's critique long before they ever had the chance to read anything by the people he criticised.⁸¹ Of course, the status of 'main textbook' may also have been helped by the fact that Carr lived to the healthy age of 90, dying in 1982, thus having the chance of being the grand old man of International Relations throughout much of the Cold War.

⁷⁵ 'Carr, Edward Hallett (1892–1982)', *DNB*.

⁷⁶ B. Porter, 'David Davies and the Enforcement of Peace' in Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 68.

⁷⁷ E.H. Carr, *History of Soviet Russia* (Macmillan, 1950-1978).

⁷⁸ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (Penguin, 1961).

⁷⁹ 'Carr, Edward Hallett (1892–1982)' *DNB*.

⁸⁰ Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 1.

⁸¹ Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 16. Also supported by own readings of the scholarly literature on the Interwar thinkers.

In this respect, I consider it strongly to my advantage that I originally approached the period and its actors as a historian more familiar with Carr as a specialist in Russian history and historical method than as a founder of International Relations theory, and consequently was extensively acquainted with the texts of Zimmern and Murray in their own right before reading *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Approaching their texts without the lenses of Carr allowed for a fresh look at the material. This thesis does not intend to engage deeply in the ongoing dialogue with Carr that so many IR scholars still have, but because so much of the scholarship on Zimmern and Murray is coloured by Carr, it is pertinent to consider whether he presented them fairly.

The basic premise of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is a distinction between utopians and realists, where utopians are described as thinkers basing their worldview on theory and expecting facts to follow: "The utopian makes political theory a norm to which political practice ought to conform".⁸² The morality of the utopian thus becomes defined by what people *ought* to do, on the expectation that once the "*ought*" has been clearly explained, actual behaviour will follow.⁸³ Carr states that the League of Nations was based on such an intellectual utopia, where 19th century theories of utilitarianism of Bentham and Stuart Mill as applied to the national democratic idea were transposed onto the international scene without regard to the differences between the domestic and the international realities.⁸⁴ Curiously, while Carr referred briefly to the peace projects of Rousseau, Kant and Abbe de Saint-Pierre, he only discussed Bentham's utilitarianism, and not his plan for perpetual peace as an origin for the ideas of his utopians.⁸⁵ It is interesting to notice that Zimmern himself, in a

⁸² Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 12.

⁸³ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 5-9 and 31-36.

⁸⁴ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 26-28.

⁸⁵ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 25. The various projects for perpetual peace are analysed in chapter two of this thesis.

1921 evaluation of George Louis Beer, the American historian and member of the US delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, makes a similar distinction between Realist and Utopian, writing that “the scholar in public affairs is a Realist, he has his feet on the rock of fact, of world facts. [...] And thus unlike the philosopher, who sets up his utopia in an unchartered wilderness that will never be marked of the plain man’s map, he can carry men with him in his thinking.”⁸⁶ So while Carr firmly placed Zimmern in the group of utopians, there is no question that Zimmern saw not only George Beer, but also himself, as one of the scholar-realists working in the tradition of Thucydides (to whom he frequently refers in the same article).

While much of Carr’s book is a polemic against British internationalists of the inter-war years, most of the quotes that he uses to argue that the League of Nations was rooted in a utopian conception of international politics in fact come from Americans, in particular Woodrow Wilson, but also President Taft and others.⁸⁷ In fact, Carr made more references to Wilson than to Cecil and Zimmern added together, so while Cecil in particular is mentioned frequently in connection with the creation of the League of Nations,⁸⁸ Carr often uses the words of Americans expressed prior to the creation of the League as a basis for criticising the interwar ideas of his own British compatriots. Carr argued that it was the influence of America, “still in the heyday of Victorian Prosperity and of Victorian belief in the comfortable Benthamite creed” that had brought utilitarianism back to Europe after the War, and that “nearly all popular theories between the two world wars were reflections, seen in an American mirror, of nineteenth-century liberal thought”. His argument would in fact have been more

⁸⁶ A. Zimmern, ‘The Scholar in Public Affairs’, in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*, pp. 8-9. The paper, produced in 1921, had first been published in a tribute to Beer in 1924.

⁸⁷ Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, pp. 8, 14, 18, 27, 32-34, 37-39 among many others.

⁸⁸ Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, pp. 18, 36-38.

powerful if he had quoted his so-called utopians more frequently to compare them with the ideas expressed by American internationalists.⁸⁹

Since Zimmern and Cecil are among the utopians specifically named by Carr, this is a point where it can be argued that he was simply wrong. As this work will repeatedly show, Zimmern, Cecil and the other members of the group of thinkers who form the focus of this research considered the British Empire to be a kind of international organisation and a direct model for the League of Nations. This implies that while they might reasonably be accused of trying to use 19th (and early 20th) century experiences as a model for the League of Nations, they cannot simply be dismissed as using national experience as a model for international experience since none of them would have accepted that the Empire consisted of one nation only. In this context it is interesting to note that while Carr refers to plenty of Zimmern's published works, he at no point in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* refers to Zimmern's 1926 *Third British Empire*, which is the work where Zimmern most clearly makes the case for the Empire having practical experience that makes it a relevant model for the League.⁹⁰ Whether this omission is conscious or the result of Carr overlooking relevant material is not clear. It is however interesting in the context to see that Carr in 1939 himself used the Empire, now renamed Commonwealth, as a relevant comparison for international cooperation, though in his case he used it as an example of the problems of cooperation:

The fact that the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations have hitherto steadfastly refused to set up any kind of permanent and obligatory procedure for the judicial settlement of disputes between one another should serve as a warning to those

⁸⁹ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 25-26. Both quotes from p. 26.

⁹⁰ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 77-79.

who are disposed to attach undue importance to the perfection of judicial machinery in international relations. It is a curious paradox that, by signing the optional Clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court and by excluding from its operation inter-Commonwealth disputes, Great Britain and the Dominions are bound in this respect towards many foreign countries by an obligation more far-reaching than they have assumed among themselves.⁹¹

Thus Carr himself in effect legitimises the use of the Empire/Commonwealth as a model—even if a negative one—for international relations, and as such justifies it as a relevant model for his “utopians” to use (even if they drew, in his opinion, the wrong lessons from it). In using the Empire as a model for the League of Nations, they may have been naive and mistaken about the lessons it taught, but they were not, even by Carr’s own definition, utopian. Carr’s (mis)representation of Zimmern and his fellow idealist internationalist thinkers is therefore not simply a question of a now irrelevant historical argument precisely because it continues to shape the way in which many contemporary scholars approach the vaguely defined groups of utopians.

Why Carr’s work misrepresented these thinkers, is not the subject of this thesis and has not been investigated. However, given that his work was published in 1939, just as World War II war breaking out, it was very much part of an ongoing discussion in Britain about British politics and the influence of public academics. Many of the men targeted by Carr were direct academic competitors who certainly supported a different view on international relations than his own, and constraints of time—assuming that Carr wanted to get the book out as soon as possible—might have encouraged him to use easily available quotes from American politicians, rather than mining the

⁹¹ Carr, *The Twenty Year's Crisis*, p. 199.

academic output of his colleagues for the sake of supporting his arguments. But this is speculation. The fact is that *The Twenty Years' Crisis* was an early work by Carr, and he could scarcely have imagined how influential it would become for future scholarship.

Who were these utopians condemned by Carr? His strictures were not limited to the individuals who formed part of the group of imperial-internationalists. Indeed, apart from Zimmern, Cecil, Arnold Toynbee, and Norman Angell, it is not particularly clear who Carr was discussing since he gave few names. More recent writers have therefore typically composed a group according to some vaguely defined borders and own interests. Morefield clearly included Murray in her book, as does Peter Wilson in his articles challenging some of Carr's interpretations,⁹² but the 1995 collected work *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*, though edited by Wilson, does not (Murray's name does recur in various chapters so he is in a sense both present and absent). Instead, the list of 'Thinkers' comprises a list including Philip Noel-Baker, David Davies, Zimmern, Norman Angell, Leonard Woolf, J.A. Hobson, J.M. Keynes, David Mitrany, Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian), and Toynbee.⁹³ Smuts, though given brief mention by Carr,⁹⁴ hardly ever appears in the pages of *Thinkers*; in fact he is only mentioned once, in passing, in the chapter on Zimmern.⁹⁵ One might wonder if the absence of Smuts in Morefield's *Covenants* reflects Carr's limited interest in him in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

⁹² Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', pp. 1-16; Wilson, 'Retrieving Cosmos', Wilson, 'Gilbert Murray and International Relations', pp. 881-909.

⁹³ Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*. Of the men listed, neither Noel-Baker, Davies, Woolf, Mitrany, or Kerr are mentioned at all by Carr, and Keynes and Hobson are each only mentioned once in footnote references to one of their works (Keynes on p. 43, Hobson on p. 69) and in neither case in a context that clearly marks them as utopians.

⁹⁴ Carr, *The Twenty Year's Crisis*, p. 28.

⁹⁵ Rich, 'Alfred Zimmern's Cautious Idealism' in, Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 84.

The consequence of all this is that any number of political thinkers from the interwar period can be categorised at will as relevant to Carr's analysis, leaving the 'targets' a poorly-defined group to be condemned, unless salvaged by a more sympathetic 're-evaluation'. Most of the interwar internationalists have in a sense been written out of the history of International Relations theory. A popular IR theory textbook for postgraduates, *Theories of International Relations*,⁹⁶ in its fifth edition in 2013, mentions Carr and *The Twenty Years' Crisis* six lines into the introduction and repeatedly afterwards throughout the book.⁹⁷ Zimmern is first introduced on page 7, as a target of Carr's criticism, and only in passing on page 11 after that. Murray and Smuts are not mentioned at all, while the chapter on Liberalism as an IR theory is only concerned with its re-emergence after the Cold War.⁹⁸

This trend in the literature means that people like Zimmern have been left out in the cold, defined in Carr's terms as an interwar internationalist and utopian, and therefore largely dismissed without any real evaluation of his writings. The result is shown in the limited amount of modern scholarship about Zimmern, and indeed other imperialist-internationalists, and consequently this thesis will focus closely on their writings. It is also worth pointing out that there is a particular opportunity for a scholar to write a monograph on Zimmern's work and impact in a way that does not take as its starting point Carr's assessment of him. Such a work would increase our knowledge of one of the key founders of the field of International Relations. Although the interwar idealists (broadly interpreted) did not consider themselves mortally wounded by *The Twenty Years' Crisis* when it was published back in 1939, as Peter

⁹⁶ S. Burchill & A. Linklater (eds), *Theories of International Relations* (5th ed. Palgrave, 2013).

⁹⁷ Burchill & Linklater (eds), *Theories of International Relations*, pp. 1, 4, 7, 9, 27-28, 33, 34, 52, 54, 60, 65, 112, 115, 122, 124, 218, 235, 327. That is 18 individual mentions of Carr, equivalent to 5 % of the pages in the book.

⁹⁸ S. Burchill, 'Liberalism' in Burchill & Linklater (eds), *Theories of International Relations*, pp. 57-87

Wilson shows in his 1998 article 'The Myth of the First Great Debate'⁹⁹, Carr has, for the time being at least, been successful in defining as utopian a whole group of thinkers. This thesis aims to show that some of them, at least, were far more sophisticated and indeed 'realistic' in their attempt to understand how international organisations could be developed that were both grounded in history yet capable of creating a foundation for a new pattern of international relations.

1.7 Theoretical framework

It has been seen, then, that this thesis provides a study of a loosely defined group of individuals, referred to here as the imperialist-internationalists, focusing in particular on their public debates about the Empire as an international organisation and thus as a relevant model for the League of Nations. It is essentially a piece of intellectual history, though it also uses prosopographic methods when analysing the group identity of the imperialist-internationalists (to the extent it existed), in order to foster a fuller understanding of the ideas they held in common. From a prosopographic perspective, it is clearly the study of narrow elite, a "small[s] group of well documented individuals",¹⁰⁰ although the thesis also focuses on the important differences between individual perspectives. The thesis also uses methods derived from philology, with its intense focus on the meaning of the finer details in writing, along with insights derived from various historians of philosophy. The contribution of each member of the group is primarily analysed through their published works, as these represented their voice in the public debate, although careful attention is also

⁹⁹ Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', pp. 1-16.

¹⁰⁰ K. Verboven, M. Carlier, J. Dumolyn, 'A short manual to the Art of Prosopography' at <http://prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/images/01%20Verboven%20pdf.pdf> (17. December 2013), p. 42.

given to selected archival material (particularly the correspondence between key individuals and the various drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations).

A significant aspect of the thesis is an analysis of the philosophical roots of their ideas. Chapter 2 explores the long Western tradition of viewing empires as a source of international peace, while chapter 3 focuses on the content and impact of Classical education in the late nineteenth century. Chapter 2 analyses a selection of political and historical works from antiquity to the nineteenth century, outlining the development over time of ideas on peace and its connection to empires or world states. It shows how both the imperial federalists and the imperialist-internationalists were, perhaps both consciously and instinctively, following in a long established Western tradition. Chapter 3 then moves beyond this focus on the grand tradition of Western thinking about questions of empire and international order and focuses on the specific set of ideas that most of the imperialist-internationalists were exposed to during their education. Particular attention is given to classical studies at Oxford, where many of them studied, exploring in particular the influence of the liberal values embedded in the historical writing of George Grote. This chapter also examines the influence exercised by the Hegelian philosopher T.H. Green, whose ideas on the ethics of state and community helped to shape the outlook of several generations of Oxford undergraduates.

Chapters 4 to 6 then analyse in depth how the imperialist-internationalists conceptualised the British Empire as an International Organisation, its role as a potential model for the League, and the relationship between the League and the reformed British Commonwealth. All three chapters rest primarily on a close reading of the sources, exploring the ongoing debate on how to formulate the new reality of the

Empire and what its impact would and should be. Chapter 4 focuses in particular on how the Empire was reformulated as an international organisation, examining how World War 1 changed its internal structure as regards relations between Britain and the Dominions, as well as the debate about whether cultural Englishness was a precondition for efficient internationalism. Particular attention is also given to the string of alternative names offered for the new version of the Empire, as they reveal the underlying thoughts about what kind of unit or organisation it was.

Chapter 5 then focuses on how the imperialist-internationalists considered that the Empire could serve as a model for the League, both ideologically and practically, examining the ways in which it could foster new forms of internationalism. The ideological aspects are examined primarily through the published writings of men like Zimmern and Murray, while the practical aspects are analysed through a combination of published papers and archival records of the various drafts of the Covenant. The chapter also shows through published and archival sources that even politicians who were against the League could agree that it had been based on the model of the British Empire. Chapter 6, the last of the main chapters, analyses the ways in which the imperialist-internationalists expected the League and Commonwealth to continue to influence each other in an ongoing symbiosis. Since the actual development of intra-imperial relations and the Commonwealth itself are well-covered in the existing scholarly literature, the chapter focuses focus primarily on the inter-relationship between the two processes.

The conclusion sums up the ideas of imperialist-internationalism, challenging Carr's dismissal of their ideas for being utopian, and argues that figures like Zimmern, Smuts, and Murray can be of value in the ongoing debate about how to combine

internationalist cooperation with the existence of fully independent states. It also highlights their challenge to Marxism by placing imperialism as a natural predecessor to internationalism.

2: Ideas on empires as peace-creators from antiquity to the late 19th Century

“An empire” and “an international organisation” are typically seen as two different things. Though both involve the organisation of more than one nation, often with a strong element of preserving peace and order between the constituent parts, a qualitative difference is commonly understood between the two terms. An empire is understood to spread its authority through forcing other nations under its control. International organisations are supposed to be created and expanded through the voluntary collaboration of their constituent parts.

This difference between coercion and free collaboration is treated as essentially a moral issue, and it strips the term “empire” of any legitimacy, as the liberal-democratic paradigm does not accept coercion as a legitimate political means. The term “an international organisation”, however, was not used before the twentieth century. Political models for co-operation or international organisation were suggestions for how to organise internationally, but not—in name—for how to create “an international organisation”. Proposals for international co-operation to secure international peace and order might call for “a Diet”, “a Congress”, “a Concert”, or, in time, “a League”, but they did not call for “an International Organisation”. They did, however, on some occasions call for “an Empire”.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ The full range can be seen in E. Aksu (ed.), *Early Notions of Global Governance. Selected Eighteenth-Century Proposals for 'Perpetual Peace'* (University of Wales Press, 2008).

The word “empire” is derived from the Latin “*imperium*” having command, or rule, of something, just like the Greek “*arché*”. When proposing an international arrangement to secure peace, most proposals included some sort of organisational body that was to have binding authority over the members. In other words, the organisational body was to have rule, or command, over certain aspects of the member-states affairs. That is a kind of *imperium*, and “empire” was therefore a natural choice of name for such an organisation. However, as argued by Parchami in *Hegemonic Peace*, it is implied by “*imperium*” that it has been imposed by military order following a victory, or string of victories, so it is implicitly militaristic.¹⁰² Yet up until World War I, in spite of its militaristic origins, there existed a fluidity around the term “empire” where it could be understood either in the coercive meaning that we use today, or in a more collaborative manner, where the militaristic aspect was seen more as a kind of policing effort, to some degree resembling the common understanding of “an international organisation”.¹⁰³ George Grote’s *History of Greece* from the mid-nineteenth century, analysed in chapter three, is a good example of the ambivalence of the term. On one hand it detailed the perceived ills of the Empire of Alexander the Great, presented as coercive, militaristic and anti-democratic, while on the other hand it discussed the Athenian Empire as an internally democratic and often positive force for the member cities, whether they originally were voluntarily part of that empire or not.¹⁰⁴ This fluidity allowed the term “empire” to be used from antiquity onwards in political suggestions for how to arrange international collaboration and order in a manner conducive to peace.

¹⁰² Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, pp.15-30.

¹⁰³ One might here think of UN peacekeepers or “Blue helmets”, who are usually, at least in Western media, accepted as a positive policing force, rather than as a coercive and oppressing force.

¹⁰⁴ See for example G. Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V* (John Murray, 1846. 1870 edition), pp. 310-311, and G. Grote, *History of Greece, Volume XII*, (John Murray, 1856. 1869 edition), pp. 85-88.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the separation between the two types of empire became confused, to say the least, as the British Empire contained elements of both. The vast majority of colonies were clearly the subjects of a coercive empire, but the burgeoning Dominions, at least in regards to their white, politically dominant populations, fell into the category of voluntary collaboration. In that context, the imperialist-internationalists started to see an essential separation between the coercive empire and the empire of voluntary collaboration, and they came to promote a change in name of the voluntary empire, exactly to stress its distinctness from the coercive part of the empire. That, however, was a development of the twentieth century, and mainly from World War I onwards. The topics of the concept of "empire" in the late nineteenth century and the need for the change of name away from Empire are further developed in chapter three and four.

This chapter focuses on the western European tradition of seeing empire as a constructive form of international organisation, conducive to peace and the preservation of the liberty of the citizens within its confines. The thesis is that by the early twentieth century, this specifically positive imperial tradition was still alive among political thinkers and it was a relevant part of the intellectual background of the imperialist-internationalists. That many other views on 'empire' either commensurable or incommensurable have also existed, is in no manner rejected by their absence here, nor is it argued that the positive tradition was dominant by World War I. However, as the imperialist-internationalists were leading influences on the British approach to creating the League of Nations, it is the tradition of empires as a form of international organisation that is the scope of investigation in this chapter and not the alternatives views.

Though the development of political ideas is closely connected to the contemporary political and social conditions, only sparse historical context is provided here where essential, as a full explanation of the historical context, would dominate the chapter and lead it to expand uncontrollably. The scope of this chapter is very broad as it covers nearly two and a half millennia, from Greek antiquity to the mid-nineteenth century. The period has been divided into three sections, Antiquity, The Middle Ages, and Modernity. For practical purposes, the analysis in the first two sections was based on a few selected texts, while the third section is based on a rather broader selection. All texts help demonstrate the existence of a Western European tradition of thought considering empires a constructive element in international relations. Emphasis has been placed on both consistency, not least in the form of an adherence to the idea of the Roman Empire, and on innovation, when genuinely new and challenging ideas came out.

It will also be seen that the early twentieth century is in part represented by a couple of texts engaging directly with the earlier writings, showing how the tradition was kept alive. One particular publication will be highlighted, as its topic and purpose makes it uniquely suitable for this work. The publication in question is *Leagues of Nations: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* published in London in 1919 under the pen name Elizabeth York.¹⁰⁵ In it, York supported the League idea with her own interpretation of historical sources. Interestingly, many of the sources she used, Dante, Abbé Saint Pierre, Penn, Rousseau, and Kant remain dominant in present work on the concepts of world states and perpetual peace,¹⁰⁶ and largely reflect the selection in

¹⁰⁵ E. York, *Leagues of Nations: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Swarthmore Press, 1919). Another pamphlet, by the historian A.F. Pollard, goes more briefly through the same general set of events and thinkers in his A.F. Pollard, *The League of Nations in History* (Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 1-8

¹⁰⁶ For general intro on World State see C. Lu, "World Government", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =

Early Notions of Global Governance. Selected Eighteenth-Century Proposals for 'Perpetual Peace', printed in 2008.¹⁰⁷

2.1 Antiquity

Antiquity is a wonderfully wide term that covers at least some six centuries and two major European civilisations, so no brief analysis can possibly pretend to be representative of the entire period, though this analysis will cover both Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. However, traditionally, when we speak of Ancient Greece, it is in fact the fifth and fourth centuries BC we are referring to, and it is the period analysed here, as it was also the period of interest to the classicists of the early twentieth century. From a historical perspective, these two centuries have offered a clear set of events and issues that have tended to dominate the interest in it: the Persian War, the Delian League also known as the Athenian Empire, The Peloponnesian War, Athenian democracy, the “golden age of philosophy”—especially Plato and Aristotle—and Alexander the Great and the spread of Hellenism.

Reflection on this set of events and issues goes back, indeed, to antiquity itself and has continued ever since. The collected writings of Plato and Aristotle have been fundamental to the development of Western philosophy, though they have not been equally in vogue in Western Europe in all periods. The Persian and Peloponnesian Wars fast got their keynote historians in Herodotus and Thucydides respectively, who have since been considered among the founders of western historical writing and, in the case of Thucydides, have remained relevant as a central historian for International Relations theorists as well. The importance of Athens permeates through works on

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/world-government/>>. Main writings on ‘perpetual peace’ are gathered in Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*.

¹⁰⁷ Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*. Interestingly, the introduction contains the only reference to York, *Leagues of Nations* that I have found in any scholarly publication.

ancient Greece, and as to Alexander, his conquests have consistently been acknowledged to be a turning point in history, and his personal exploits have been popularised in many periods since.

2.1.1 'Empire' in 5th and 4th centuries BC Greece

In terms of political ideas, we do not have many ancient Greek texts on empires, as their natural focus was the city state. Thus, both Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* and Aristotle's *Politics* are primarily concerned with how to rule a good city, rather than giving much thought to what it takes for something to be a good empire. Indeed, their focus on defining the right size of the population of a good city and the measures that should be taken to keep it within its limits would seem to suggest a distinctly anti-imperial approach. Thus, in spite of their importance to later philosophers, and in spite of their lives being linked to the early 20th century ideas and ideals of Hellenism, it was not the great philosophers who started the concept of empires as a positive form of international organisation.

A better place to look is in the histories by Herodotus and Thucydides, both of whom lived in the fifth century BC. Though their dates of birth and death are not exactly known, Herodotus is generally considered to have been about twenty years older than Thucydides, having been born sometime around 480 BC, and Thucydides is assumed to have died about 400 BC.¹⁰⁸ Herodotus is from his own work known as Herodotus of Halicarnassus (on the West coast of modern Turkey, then a Greek city under Persian control with strong connections to the non-Greek neighbouring peoples), but

¹⁰⁸ 'Herodotus' and 'Thucydides' in *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed, 1996).

was in antiquity also known as Herodotus of Thurii, an Athenian colony in Southern Italy that Herodotus according to some traditions took part in founding.¹⁰⁹ It is thus worth noting that he was not an Athenian, and while his historical veracity has been challenged all the way back to Thucydides, his personal views on Athens and his presentation of how it was perceived are valuable as reflections of what he expected his audience to accept about Athens.

Thucydides, on the other hand, was an Athenian citizen, so his writings on Athens should be viewed in light of his own loyalties. The main section from his *History of the Peloponnesian Wars* to be used is 'Pericles' Funeral Oration', where Thucydides/Pericles presents an idealised version of Athens. For the purpose of this analysis, it is irrelevant whether the words and intentions are those of Pericles or Thucydides, as their value is what they tell about the Athenian ideal of Athens. However, it is noticeable that Thucydides later, in the Melian Dialogue, presents a much harder and more cynical approach of Athens as a great/imperial power.¹¹⁰

--What did the Greeks use for 'Empire'?--

Given that the Greeks did not work with the concept of 'empire' as such, it is not in a direct reference to empire, that their relevance is to be found, but rather in issues that relate indirectly to empires.

---Colonies---

First of all, though the Greek city states did not see themselves as empires, they did form colonies. This issue, though not directly related to the theories of empires as a

¹⁰⁹ 'Herodotus' in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Aristotle referred to Herodotus as "of Thurii" in *Rhetorics* 3.9.

¹¹⁰ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Penguin, 1954), book II, 34-46, book V, 84-116.

form of international organisation through the middle ages, became deeply relevant to the imperialist-internationalists in the early twentieth century, who, in line with Adam Smith and various nineteenth century liberals, thought they could see an analogy to the British Empire itself in the relationship between Britain and the Dominions. This assumed similarity is dealt with later in this chapter and in chapter three.

The Greek model, at least in theory, was intimately based on the perception of the city state as the basic model of organisation, since a city state—as discussed by Plato and Aristotle—could become too big. The response to an overflowing population was to send out settlers to start a colony, theoretically in vacant land, in reality often by subduing a pre-existing population. The colony would grow under the auspices of its mother-city until it had reached a level of self-sufficiency. Its constitution would often be based on the constitution of the mother-city, but it was understood that a former colony would have its own political development depending on its circumstances. As the Melian Dialogue highlights, a familial relationship between mother- and daughter-cities was expected to continue.¹¹¹ All things equal, it was a bond that the cities did use as a base for alliances, and there was an expectation on family loyalty in times of need, whether from mother- to daughter-city or vice versa. Of course, as the Melian Dialogue also shows,¹¹² all things were often not equal, and in many cases help would not be offered, and ancient Greek history is full of examples of mother-, daughter- and granddaughter- cities fighting each other.

However, for the imperialist-internationalists, the development of Greek colonies from dependents to independent city states with a cultural, familial bond of loyalty to the mother- and sister-states appeared the perfect example of how Dominion

¹¹¹ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 5, 104-110.

¹¹² Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 5, 114-116.

independence was consistent with a future continued cooperation in the Commonwealth.

---Concepts---

In regards to empires as a form or international organisation, the Greeks also contributed ideas that were later influential. Broadly speaking they can be categorised as ideas of universalism, democracy, and of the greater state benefitting the smaller states.

Greek universalism was, of course, a limited matter. Inside the city state there was a clear division between men and women, and citizens, slaves, and metics, while between the city states there was an equally clear division between Athenians, Spartans, Thebans, etc. However, there was also the greater division, that between Greeks and others, the barbarians, whether weak barbarians like those up north, or strong contesting civilisations such as the Persians. In spite of all the wars between the Greeks city states they upheld a clear belief in the rather abstract higher identity, that of Greeks. At the end of the eighth book of his *Histories*, Herodotus has an Athenian delegation state to the Spartans that Athens will not betray the common Greek cause against the Persians, because: "the Greek race being of the same blood and same language, and the temples of the gods and sacrifices in common; and our similar customs; for the Athenians to become betrayers of these would not be well."¹¹³ In this way, Herodotus defines the Greeks based on their sense of familial, cultural,

¹¹³ Herodotus, *The Histories* (Folio Society, London, 1992), book 8, 144.

religious, and linguistic bonds—a basis for identity essentially, and hardly coincidentally, identical to John Stuart Mill's definition of nationality¹¹⁴—and assumes that against an outside enemy, this identity holds obligations higher than immediate individual concerns. When he attributes such a sentiment to the Athenian delegation, it is reasonable to assume that such a sentiment would be considered valid to his target audience—other Greeks.

There are plenty of examples of the call for Greek unity against the others. The Parthenon frieze depicted Greeks fighting all kinds of barbarians, Demosthenes called for Greek solidarity in the fight against Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander, and Alexander called on Greek solidarity in his campaign against Persia to 'avenge the earlier Persian invasions'. The last example shows how Greek identity was somewhat flexible, to the extent that it could be a debate whether the Macedonians were barbarians or pseudo-Greeks. By adhering to the idea of a common identity beyond the confines of their city states, or colonial filial relations, they set up the idea of a universal identity, with the potential for inter-city collaboration and sense of common loyalty beyond the individual borders.

Another idea that the Greeks famously put forward was that of democracy, which found its strongest proponent in Athens. That it was not similar to a modern democracy is a debate that is not necessary here, but the very basic idea of democracy, that government rests with the peoples, specifically citizens, is an important founding principle for all the later political philosophers who based the legitimacy of power in the people, even when they didn't use that basis for a democracy. The Athenian democracy had many critics, Plato noticeably among them,

¹¹⁴ J.S. Mill, 'Considerations on Representative Government' (1861) in J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 427.

but Pericles' Funeral Oration may be considered one of the strongest eulogies of it, formulating the finest ideas, if not realities, of the system:

Let me say that our system of Government does not copy the institutions of our neighbours. It is more a case of our being a model to others, than of our imitating anybody else. Our constitution is called democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which a man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in obscurity because of poverty.¹¹⁵

Thus does Thucydides, through the oration of Pericles, open his praise of Athens, expressing key ideals of democracy so succinctly that any democratic thinker today could use the same definitions. Further on in the Oration, it is declared how the democratic system has led Athens to have the greater wealth and a stronger military force,¹¹⁶ a sentiment that Herodotus supports in book five, where he writes “[...] equality of rights shows, not in one instance only, but in every way, what an excellent thing it is. For the Athenians, when governed by tyrants, were superior in war to none of their neighbours; but when freed from tyrants, became by far the first”¹¹⁷ In this way, both Thucydides and Herodotus connects democracy to military and economic power, and democracy thus becomes instrumental to Athenian achievement, with the understanding that similar benefits could be gained by other states adopting it.

According to Herodotus, Athenian power enabled them to be “the saviours of Greece”, because their decision to fight Persia rather than flee or negotiate,¹¹⁸ gave

¹¹⁵ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 2, 37.

¹¹⁶ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 2, 38-39.

¹¹⁷ Herodotus, *The Histories*, book 5, 78.

¹¹⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, book 7, 139.

the other Greek cities the chance to fight, and he has a Spartan delegation say to the Athenians that “you, [...] always, and from of old, have been seen to assert the freedom of many nations”,¹¹⁹ supporting the notion of the Funeral Oration that Athens was dedicated to the welfare not only of itself, but also of its friends, and that the Athenian dedication to liberty went beyond the private sphere. The sentiment of Athens being the leader of the Greeks was much later echoed in Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander*, where he had Alexander ordering Athens to take good care of its own affairs “since, if anything should happen to him, it would have the rule over Greece.”¹²⁰ Plutarch also stressed Alexander’s understanding of the importance of political freedom to the Greeks, stating “And being desirous of honour among the Greeks, he [Alexander] wrote them that all their tyrannies were abolished and they might live under their own laws; moreover, he wrote the Plataeans specially that he would rebuild their city, because their ancestors had furnished their territory to the Greeks for the struggle in behalf of their freedom.”¹²¹ While Plutarch wrote his work more than four hundred years after the death of Alexander, and at a time when the Roman Empire was at its height, he was of Greek birth and it reflects his impression of what was important to the Greeks.

The idea of the major powers securing the freedoms of the smaller cities leads to the last point mentioned, in relation to the idea of empires as something positive. Being powerful allowed Athens to help others which in turn conferred benefits on Athens itself. According to the Funeral Oration “We [Athens] make friends by doing good to others, not by receiving good from them. [...] When we do kindnesses to others, we do

¹¹⁹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, book 8, 142.

¹²⁰ Plutarch, ‘Alexander’ in *Plutarch's Lives* translated by B. Perrin, (Harvard University Press, 1919), 13, sec. 2.

¹²¹ Plutarch, ‘Alexander’, 34, sec. 1.

not do them out of any calculations of profit or loss: we do them without afterthought, relying on our free liberality.”¹²² Here, clearly, the benefits for Athens, apart from a good reputation, are not named, but earlier it has been mentioned that “the greatness of our city brings it about that all the good things from all over the world flow in to it, so that to us it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products”,¹²³ and that free flow of international products clearly is seen as a benefit. Between Herodotus and Thucydides it is thus possible to make out a representation of Athens as a major democratic power, that was using its economic and military wealth not only for its own benefit, but also for that of its allies, and on a greater scale for Greece, or the Greeks as a people. Those ideals—clearly, this was not all reality—represent a relevant foundation for the idea of empire as a form of international organisation benefitting not only the core power state, but also its minions.

2.1.2 Romans and ‘empire’-

It is the Roman part of antiquity to which we owe the concept of empire that has continued as a relevant political idea in Europe ever since. Within a European context, the Roman Empire must be considered the empire *par excellence*, at the very least until the British Empire, and its currency in political debate has not yet been outspent—references to it will still occasionally turn up in debates about the European Union.

The practical historic importance of the Roman Empire is indisputable, everything from the spread of Latin languages to the remnants of Roman baths in the furthest corners of the empire show how vast and influential it was. Equally, European political ideas since have repeatedly returned to key concepts connected to the

¹²² Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 2, 50.

¹²³ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 2, 38.

Empire, first and foremost the idea of *Pax Romana*, the Imperial Peace with all its benefits, and the concept of universal citizenship throughout the Empire. The Roman concept of *Pax*, peace, was, according to Parchami, understood as “a condition that could only result from a successful war” which meant that it was conceptually linked to the holder of *Imperium*.¹²⁴ The appeal of the idea of the Roman Empire, was so strong that the idea of *translatio imperii* (transfer of empire) was introduced by Otto of Freising in his *Chronica* from the mid twelfth century to give legitimacy to the Holy Roman Empire.¹²⁵ Similarly, in Russia, the title of Czar and Autocrat were *Caesar* and the Greek translation of Emperor and in fact another attempt to claim legitimacy from the Roman Empire.¹²⁶

-Roman Sources-

As in the case of Greece, it is also from the Roman period relevant to look to the historians, some of whom are a clear link between Greek and Roman antiquity.

The earliest extant history of Rome is by Polybius (c.200-118 BC), who was a Greek by birth and wrote his *Histories* in Greek, describing “by what means, and under what kind of polity, almost the whole inhabited world was conquered and brought under the dominion of the single city of Rome, and that too within a period of not quite fifty-three years?”.¹²⁷ In other words, it was about the creation of the Roman Empire of his

¹²⁴ Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, pp.15-30. Quote p. 19.

¹²⁵ Private correspondence with Dr. Sten Ebbesen of the University of Copenhagen.

¹²⁶ The last appearance of *translatio imperii* was the *Third Reich* of Hitler, which however is somewhat distinct, as it was more focused on being the heir of the previous German Empire –the Holy Roman– than of the Ancient Roman Empire. The appeal of the Ancient Roman Empire, however, was strong to Mussolini’s Fascists, but as they by-passed the Holy Roman Empire, their interest was less in *translatio imperii* than in a restoration of the old Roman Empire.

¹²⁷ Polybius, *Histories*, translated by E.S. Shuckburgh. (Macmillan. 1889), Book I,1.

time, with a clear belief that it was of crucial relevance which type of government it had.

From the Augustan period with its end of the old republic and formalising the Roman state as an empire with an *imperator* for life, Livy and his *History of Rome* stand out. Unlike Polybius, Livy was of Roman birth. He used Polybius as a main source for many parts of his books, but also plenty of other sources, including some that he acknowledged were entirely mythical. Livy's near contemporary, Vergil, wrote the *Aeneid*—a Roman complement to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—with the founding myth of Rome that led it back to the fall of Troy. Though the *Aeneid* is entirely a work of fiction, its comments as Aeneas is allowed a vision of the future—the Augustan period—give a good insight into the concept of the purpose and use of empire as seen by Vergil. Slightly earlier than Livy and Vergil is Cicero (106-43 BC), the famous orator, who wrote many political and philosophical treatises, among others *De Re Publica*. Though his open engagement in political ideas could have made him an obvious main source for use in the present context, many of his considerations related more to the internal strife in the Roman political system, in which he was himself an active participant, and were less directed at the imperial aspects of Roman Rule.

As can be seen in chapter three, the classical authors used in this thesis are largely, though not entirely, the same that were typically studied in classical studies at Oxford in the late nineteenth century. This strong overlap was not necessarily a deliberate choice but rather a simple focus on the most famous texts. It was also these texts that would have helped to influence the views about empire developed by the imperialist-internationalists who form the focus of this thesis.

-The Romans and Alexander-

Bridging the time from the heyday of Athens to the rise of Rome was Alexander the Great and his conquests. In his decade of conquests, Alexander managed to subdue greater territories than any had done before him, but due to the lack of consolidation and his early death in 323 BC it never really became an empire in any sense of coherent rule, though it left four strong successor dynasties after the struggle for power had ended. Nevertheless, the sheer achievement in conquest left Alexander as a towering figure, whom the Romans felt that they had to measure up to. Plutarch took the approach of comparing Alexander and Caesar in his parallel lives, while Polybius and Livy chose to compare the achievements of Alexander and his Macedonians with those of Rome and both found Rome superior.

Polybius argued that Rome was greater because the Macedonians had only conquered part of the known world, leaving in particular Europe virtually untouched, while “The Roman conquest, on the other hand, was not partial. Nearly the whole inhabited world was reduced by them to obedience: and they left behind them an empire not to be paralleled in the past or rivalled in the future.”¹²⁸ To him, the essential point of Roman superiority was size and completeness of conquest. Livy took a different perspective and asked “What would have been the results for Rome if she had been engaged in war with Alexander?”¹²⁹ focusing on a hypothetical direct match of the two powers. His answer compared numerous Roman generals through the centuries with Alexander in habits and successes, pointing out that one cannot compare Alexander’s a ten year period with the several centuries of Roman expansion and expect to find a similar consistent string of successes. However, his actual conclusion follows straight upon the question asked: “The things which tell most in war are the

¹²⁸ Polybius, *Histories*, I,2.

¹²⁹ Livy, *History of Rome*, translated by W.M. Roberts (E. P. Dutton and Co, 1912), IX, 17.

numbers and courage of the troops, the ability of the commanders, and Fortune, who has such a potent influence over human affairs, especially those of war. Any one who considers these factors either separately or in combination will easily see that as the Roman Empire proved invincible against other kings and nations, so it would have proved invincible against Alexander.”¹³⁰ In Livy’s case, then, the argument is that of an all-round superiority based on greater ability of the commanders and people of Rome, though supported by good fortune.

All the same, the Romans did not discount the Greeks, but saw Rome as their successors, something that was also true of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Polybius pointed out that the Romans had copied aspects of Greek armament being willing to adopt the best practices of other peoples.¹³¹ Likewise, Livy boosted the claim to legitimacy of Roman rule over the Greeks by having a delegation from Rhodes state that “At one time they [the Greeks] too grasped at empire in their own strength, now they pray that where the seat of empire is there it may remain; they count it enough to protect their freedom with your arms.”¹³² All in all, Rome was presented as a superior successor to the Athenian and Macedonian leadership of the Greeks, having created a true world empire by willingly embracing the best aspects of other civilizations, and being accepted by the Greeks because of their respect for the people they have conquered.

-Values of the Roman Empire-

- Citizenship-

¹³⁰ Livy, *History of Rome*, IX, 17.

¹³¹ Polybius, *Histories*, VI, 25.

¹³² Livy, *History of Rome*, XXXVII, 54.

Looking back to the Greek universal ideal of being Greeks above the specific identity of Spartan, Athenian or Melian, the Romans brought the idea of universalising people's identity and rights a big step further. Where the Greeks had generally been reluctant to extend citizenship to foreigners in their city, the success of Roman conquests in Italy, and later across Europe and the Middle East, were significantly helped by their tradition of extending the status and rights of citizenship to people from the conquered territories. Originally reserved for the elite, it was ultimately made universal with the Antonine Constitution of AD 212, but its main effects came long before then.

Livy repeatedly refers to the grant of either citizenship or *conubium* (partial citizen rights) to conquered territories or as a reward to allies throughout his work.¹³³ The case for it, is however most strongly put, in the speech he lets Camillus give to the senate on the subjection on Latium:

We are growing weary of their constant renewal of hostilities, it is for you to consult as to the best means of binding them to a perpetual peace.[...] as the Latins are concerned, you can secure for yourselves a lasting peace by either cruelty or kindness.[...] do you wish to follow the example of your ancestors and make Rome greater by conferring her citizenship on those whom she has defeated? [16] The materials for her expansion to a glorious height are here at hand. That is assuredly the most firmly-based empire, whose subjects take a delight in rendering it their obedience.¹³⁴

It is worth noting that the term "perpetual peace", later used by Rousseau in the *Projet de Paix Perpetuelle* (1756), Bentham in his *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace* (1789), and in the English translation of Kant's *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (1795) (*evig can*

¹³³ Livy, *History of Rome*, VIII,14.

¹³⁴ Livy, *History of Rome*, VIII,13.

be translated as either eternal or perpetual), is a direct translation of the Latin, *perpetua pace*, used by Livy in the text above.¹³⁵ With the speech of Camillus, Livy makes a clear case for the use of citizenship to stabilise Roman rule by making the conquered enemy a proud Roman. The policy of inclusion is stressed again, much later, when in the speech of the delegation from Rhodes, they tell the Romans that “Wherever your arms have penetrated there should the laws of Rome also penetrate.”¹³⁶ This supports the concept of an empire taken by military might, but held together by a policy of inclusion and the spread of political rights and order, giving sufficient benefits to make the conquered peoples loyal to their conqueror.¹³⁷

-Roman Constitution-

Pericles' idea of the importance of the type of rule as a precondition for greatness was shared by the Roman writers,¹³⁸ though it was the Roman constitution that was proposed as the ideal model. Polybius lists the three great powers that have come before Rome to compare their constitutions, but Athens is not among them, as pure democracy was not considered a relevant political model for a great power. Instead he described the Roman constitution as a mixed constitution using a modified Aristotlian framework that combines taking the best parts out of the three main types of government, with the consuls representing the monarchy, the senate the aristocracy, and the power of the plebs the democratic element.¹³⁹ This perception of the Roman constitution as a realisation of Aristotle's ideal, with a sort of internal checks and

¹³⁵ Livy, *History of Rome*, XIII,13.

¹³⁶ Livy, *History of Rome*, XXXVII, 54.

¹³⁷ A similar analysis based on Tacitus, Appian and Cicero can be found in Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, pp. 48-52.

¹³⁸ For example Polybius, *Histories*, VI,1.

¹³⁹ Polybius, *Histories*, VI, 11. For a recent discussion of Aristotle's mixed constitution, see M.H. Hansen, *Reflections on Aristotle's Politics*, ch. 1, (Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013).

balances between the social classes, was later echoed by Cicero,¹⁴⁰ for whom, however, it was already a paradise lost, (as with all the ideas presented in the ancient texts, we may consider them representative of ideals rather than of strict historical fact).

According to Polybius:

The result of this power of the several estates for mutual help or harm is a union sufficiently firm for all emergencies, and a constitution than which it is impossible to find a better. For whenever any danger from without compels them to unite and work together, the strength which is developed by the State is so extraordinary, that everything required is unfailingly carried out by the eager rivalry shown by all classes to devote their whole minds to the need of the hour, and to secure that any determination come to should not fail for want of promptitude; while each individual works, privately and publicly alike, for the accomplishment of the business in hand.¹⁴¹

In other words, common interest and general competition between the classes made all Romans cooperate when the interests of Rome were threatened.

In a similar manner, Polybius echoed Pericles and Herodotus in arguing that the Roman soldiers were the best because of the system that produced them. While the Athenians had suggested that their soldiers fought best because they were fighting for their own freedom, Polybius emphasised that the Romans army was strong because it

¹⁴⁰ Cicero, *On the Republic*, translated by G.W. Featherstonhaugh (G. & C. Carvill, 1829), 35-40.

¹⁴¹ Polybius, *Histories*, VI,18.

was based on 'native citizen levies' rather than mercenaries like the Carthaginians.

With an argument often repeated since, he argued that "as the Romans are fighting for country and children, it is impossible for them to relax the fury of their struggle; but they persist with obstinate resolution until they have overcome their enemies."

Mercenaries employed by the enemy could be expected to run away at the first encounter of defeat.¹⁴² While the Roman model was not based on pure democracy it was presented as basing its legitimacy in the Roman citizens, who like the Greeks before them had a mix of political rights and military obligations.

-Purpose of (Roman) Empire -

Summing up, a clear ideal of the imperial organisation as a force for good goes strongly through the texts reviewed here. While the sheer scale of conquest and military power was celebrated in its own right, it was combined with a strong sense that the Roman Empire was a positive force not only to the Rome but also to those conquered people, who like St Paul had the chance to say "I am a Roman citizen".

Vergil sums it up in a few potent lines from Aeneas' decent to the underworld when Anchises, his dead father, tells Aeneas about the future of the civilisation that he will found:

But thou, O Roman, learn with sovereign sway
To rule the nations. Thy great art shall be
To keep the world in lasting peace, to spare
humbled foe, and crush to earth the proud.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Polybius, *Histories*, VI,52.

¹⁴³ Vergil, *Aeneid*, translated by T.C. Williams (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910), VI, 850-853.

This command 'To keep the world in lasting peace' (*pacisque imponere morem*¹⁴⁴) is similar to Camillus asking the Senate in Livy to bind themselves to "a perpetual peace",¹⁴⁵ and it is this concept of *Pax Romana* that political philosophers kept returning to for the next two millennia - leading some British imperialist to speak of the *Pax Britannica* and the imperialist-internationalists to see the imperial peace as a natural precursor to international peace.

Finally, it is clear that the Roman empire was supposed to give not only a military peace, but also, as Athens before it, "to protect from the tyranny of monarchs the liberties of an ancient people" which if achieved "the whole world will regard [...] as a more striking proof of your greatness than even the winning it."¹⁴⁶

2.2 The Middle Ages

With the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Western Europe entered a period of open competition between its many peoples, several of which achieved temporary predominance in Europe, but none of which achieved any real kind of Empire until Charlemagne. The importance of Charlemagne and the concept of *translatio imperii* has already been discussed in connection with the Roman Empire, but it is only one aspect of the veneration of the ideal of the Roman Empire from the twelfth century onwards.

From the perspective of political thoughts, the ideal of the (Holy) Roman Empire became particularly important in the struggle between church and state, dominantly between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. The *Donation of Constantine* was a

¹⁴⁴ Vergil, Aeneid, VI, 852.

¹⁴⁵ Livy, *History of Rome*, VIII, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Livy, *History of Rome*, XXXVII, 54.

late eighth century fraud claiming to be a fourth century document wherein the Emperor Constantine handed over the Western Roman Empire to Pope Sylvester. The *Donation* was frequently used in debates about church vs. state power in the eleventh and twelfth century and was only refuted by Lorenzo Valla in mid-fifteenth century, though suspicions as to its originality had existed since the eleventh century.¹⁴⁷ Since the coronation of Charlemagne in 800, the popes had claimed the right of the papacy to ratify or reject the emperor chosen by the electors of the Holy Roman Empire, including the right not only to crown but also to de-crown the emperors.

It was a high-conflict setting complicated by the internal schism of the church and general accusations of corruption. A burgeoning Italian sense of nationalism infused the developing Renaissance, leading two key writers from the early fourteenth century to revive the idea of the empire as a way to peace. Born only ten years apart, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) from Florence and Marsilius of Padua (1275-c.1342) both took on the task of defending the secular power of the state from the claims of the papacy, and more broadly to argue the case for the Empire as the guarantor of peace.

-The Secular Empire-

In the context of the schism between church and state in the 13th century, Dante and Marsilius placed themselves firmly on the side of the state. The questions whether the church had the right to jurisdiction over the clergy and the right to confirm or reject the secular choice of rulers—especially the Holy Roman Emperor—were key issues of contention on which the church had developed a comprehensive set of arguments based on interpretation of Scripture and the *Donation of Constantine*. Both Dante and

¹⁴⁷ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, translated by A. Brett (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 132n.

Marsilius argued that the open competition over areas of jurisdiction between the church and state was the most persistent cause of strife and unrest in Western Europe. In the words of Dante, “what state the world has been in since that seamless garment was rent on the nail of cupidity we may easily read –would that we could not behold it!”¹⁴⁸ In this declaration, the ‘seamless garment’ referred to the Roman Empire under Augustus, in Dante’s imagination a world empire of peace and justice, and the cause of its being torn apiece was the *Donation of Constantine*, granting temporal powers to the papacy. Marsilius echoed Dante’s sentiment when he introduced it as:

This singular cause of strife. [...] –which Aristotle could not perceive, and neither has anyone else after him, who could have done, undertaken to define it – it is our will to lift the veil in such a way that it can henceforth be excluded from all realms and civil orders, and once excluded, virtuous princes and subjects can live in tranquillity more securely.¹⁴⁹

Here, as in Dante, the ‘singular cause’ is revealed to be the adoption of temporal powers by the church, thus a cause that even Aristotle could not perceive, as he antedated both Christ and the church by several centuries. This is a very strong condemnation, since Marsilius singles out the temporal powers of the church as the root cause of the destabilisation of civil society.

Given the situation, Dante and Marsilius used their strong openings as a starting-point only. Both *De Monarchia* and *Defender of the Peace* were written in three books—or discourses—and both used an entire book or discourse to argue why the church should not hold temporal power.

¹⁴⁸ Dante, Dante, *Monarchy, and, Three Political Letters* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1954) book 1, XVI. p. 26.

¹⁴⁹ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, I, 7. p. 9.

In the case of Dante, the concluding book debates, “whether the authority of the Roman Monarch (who is Monarch of the world by right as we have proved in the second book) is immediately dependent on God, or whether his authority comes from some other, a vicar or minister of God (I am referring to the Successor of Peter), who is entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁵⁰ After briefly rejecting various arguments in favour of papal authority over the emperor, Dante concluded, “that the temporal Monarch receives his authority directly, and without intermediary, from the Source of all authority”¹⁵¹, the ‘Source’ being God. Nevertheless, he thought that the emperor owed filial reverence to the pope “so that when he is enlightened by the light of paternal grace he may the more powerfully enlighten the world”¹⁵², conceding to the pope a privileged role of spiritual guidance.

Compared to Dante, Marsilius launched a much stronger attack on the power of the church. While Dante’s three books are of roughly equal length, and none of his three topics of debate thus outweighs the other, Marsilius dedicated far more than twice the amount of space to the second discourse against the papacy than to the two other discourses added together.¹⁵³ Thus, while secularism can be seen as simply one of three aspects in *De Monarchia*, the defence of the secular state is unquestionably the main issue in *Defender of the Peace*. Like Dante, Marsilius attacked the Decretalists, who focussed on the Papal Decretals, for corrupting the meaning of Scripture and ignoring the traditions of the original church.¹⁵⁴ However, while Dante based the rest of his argument on stating and then rejecting the church’s various claims to temporal

¹⁵⁰ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 3, I. p. 62.

¹⁵¹ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 3, XVI. p. 94.

¹⁵² Dante, *Monarchy*, book 3, XVI. p. 94.

¹⁵³ In the Annabel Brett edition used for this thesis, the first discourse fills 133 pages, the second discourse 402 pages, and the third summarising discourse 13 pages.

¹⁵⁴ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 3, III. pp. 64-67; Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 19. pp. 360-366

power¹⁵⁵, Marsilius merely listed most of those arguments in Discourse II chapter 3,¹⁵⁶ and used the rest of the discourse to develop extensive counterarguments.

Marsilius' key arguments in favour of a secular state came from the Bible, counter arguing the papal claims by presenting Scriptural passages that supported a division between secular power and religion. He argued that Christ had upheld the right of the Roman Empire to jurisdiction separate from religious considerations in his teachings and by submitting himself to the jurisdiction of the Empire through its lawful representative,¹⁵⁷ and that Christ had dictated a life of poverty for his disciples.¹⁵⁸ The last, Marsilius argued, was in open contradiction of the needs of a prince, and thus a sign that Christ did not intend his disciples, and thus priests, to be temporal princes. In particular, two pieces of scripture stood out. The first was "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22. 17-19), implying that the things of God and the things of Caesar are separate and that all men owe Caesar, the secular power, the tribute he is due.¹⁵⁹ This dual argument simultaneously stripped the church of its claims to secular power and to exemption from taxes, both of which were significant problems for the secular leaders at the time.¹⁶⁰ The second key Scripture is the texts connected to the Passion of Christ, because they demonstrated that Christ had chosen to be subjected to the

¹⁵⁵ For example, Dante contends the argument of the two luminaries where the church is seen as the sun and the empire as the moon, shining only by the power of the sun (book 3, IV. pp. 67-71), the argument that Peter's power to loose and bind people in heaven should imply temporal power (Book 3, VIII. pp. 75-76), and the argument of the two swords (Luke, 22. 38) that the church argued referred to religious and temporal power (Book 3, IX. pp. 76-80).

¹⁵⁶ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 3. pp. 152-158.

¹⁵⁷ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 4. pp. 159-175, the section of scripture are further analysed in the following chapter II, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 13. pp. 262-286.

¹⁵⁹ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 4, 9. pp. 166-167.

¹⁶⁰ Marsilius later stressed that no one who enjoyed the peace and protection of the state should be exempt from taxation and the jurisdiction of the legislator. Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 8, 9. p. 220.

Roman Emperor, through his representative Pontius Pilate. Marsilius argued that by choosing to be handed over from the religious court to the secular, and by accepting and suffering the verdict of the secular judge, Christ demonstrated by example that the secular power had the blessing of God and that no one, even the son of God, was exempted from temporal jurisdiction.¹⁶¹ In this perspective, Paul's appeal unto Caesar confirmed that the disciples—and, as a consequence, all priests—were under secular authority just as Christ had been.¹⁶²

The focus on separating the secular government from religious control is an essential development in the perception of how an empire should secure peace. While the ancient Greeks considered the communality of basic religious tenets part of their Greek identity and the old Roman Empire demanded respect for the main gods of the Empire, the ancient systems were not based on universal religious agreement and they allowed a high degree of religious tolerance(though monotheism was considered problematic). The connection that had developed between the Roman Empire and the Roman Church was therefore a new situation which had reached a peak during the middle ages. The insistence of Marsilius and Dante on separating the secular from the religious powers and setting the secular power above the priesthood was crucial in that it would allow the empires of the future to adopt a degree of religious tolerance again, and with that the possibility of a universal identity beyond religion.

-Dante: Introducing the World State-

¹⁶¹ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 4, 12. pp. 170-172.

¹⁶² Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 10, 10. pp. 239-240.

It is curious to notice that Dante used the Passion as an argument not so much for secular power, as for proof that the Roman Empire had been legitimate (*Monarchy*, book 2, XI. pp. 55-57).

A lasting legacy of Dante's *Monarchia* is his introduction of the concept of the World State. Though Dante himself thought that the concept went back to the ancient Roman Empire, modern sources would disagree. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, in the article on 'World State' (updated July 2012), lists Dante as the first philosopher to promote explicitly the idea of a world state, and as the person who "best articulated the Christian ideal of human unity and its expression through a world governed by a universal monarch".¹⁶³ It will be seen later that this is the argument made by York in her *Leagues of Nations*, where the first chapter covers antiquity broadly, while the second chapter focuses on Dante and his *Monarchia* specifically, with a short comparison of Dante to Marsilius included.¹⁶⁴ Dante's argument in favour of a World State, first posits that monarchy is necessary in general, starting with an authoritative reference to Aristotle:

Thus the first question is whether temporal monarchy is necessary for the well-being of the world. Now no substantial objection either from reason or authority can be urged against it, and its truth can be demonstrated by the clearest and most cogent arguments, the first of which is derived from the authority of the Philosopher in his *Politics*. There the acknowledged authority states that when several things are directed towards a single end it is necessary for one of them to act as director or ruler and for the others to be directed or ruled.¹⁶⁵

That Aristotle, in fact, did not argue that monarchy is the necessary and best form of rule, does not appear to concern Dante.

From the general assertion that monarchy is necessary, Dante moved on to declaring that there should be only one monarch:

¹⁶³ Lu, "World Government".

¹⁶⁴ York, *Leagues of Nations*.

¹⁶⁵ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 1, V (pp. 9-10).

But mankind is most one when the whole human race is drawn together in complete unity, which can only happen when it is subordinate to one Prince, as is self-evident. Therefore when mankind is subject to one Prince it is most like to God and this implies conformity to the divine intention, which is the condition of perfection, as was proved at the beginning of this chapter.¹⁶⁶

For Dante, the case for having one monarch only for all humankind was not just bolstered by Aristotle's authority and the fact that it would make human governance most God-like. One of his key arguments, often used in variations since, is that the person who is monarch of all has nothing left to desire, and freed of personal desires is able to judge justly, without reference to own advantage, because nothing will give him more advantage than he already possesses.¹⁶⁷ But if more than one monarchy exist, then the various monarchs would still be left with the desire for the possessions of each other, and could not be trusted to judge impartially in disputes between them. Thus the only way to secure justice, and with that a truly universal peace, is to gather all parts of humanity under one monarch, compared to whom no other human can have anything worth desiring. Therefore, he can judge justly, not only in disputes among individuals, but also in disputes among peoples.

It is clear, then, that Dante considered lack of justice to be the cause of strife, internally or external as well as external; that he thought that a supreme judge above all people and peoples could settle disputes, and thought that it was possible to create an un-biased judge. The combination of these three assumptions made him support of a universal monarchy or World State. The appeal of these ideas to any imperial design is easy to see, as they explicitly justify having one overreaching empire, in Dante's

¹⁶⁶ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 1, VII (p. 13).

¹⁶⁷ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 1, XI (p. 17).

mind a restored Roman Empire. This laid the basis for several centuries worth of new suggestions of a World State, unsurprisingly always with its power-centre in the home of the author. However, in a broader sense, Dante's suggestion highlighted the possibility of an international court with binding authority on all parts of the world, as a solution to strife between the nations, and in that respect, York, for instance, liberally interpreted Dante's monarchy as a precursor of the League of Nations idea.¹⁶⁸

- *Marsilius: Legitimacy and Constitution* -

Defender of the Peace is a text that bridges antiquity and modernity, containing a wealth of ideas related to both ancient political ideas and modern practises. Marsilius' focus on the secular state is only one aspect of several, where his ideas can be connected to the present.

Like the political thinkers of antiquity, Marsilius' civic starting point was the city-state, even when his contemporary scope was the Holy Roman Empire. In the first discourse, he used that basis to describe what constitutes a legitimate political government:

Let us say, then, in accordance with both the truth and the counsel of Aristotle, Politics II Chapter 6, that the 'legislator', i.e. the primary and proper efficient cause of the law, is the people or the universal body of the citizens or else its prevalent part, when, by means of an election or will expressed in speech in a general assembly of the citizens, it commands or determines, subject to temporal penalty or punishment, that something should be done or omitted in respect of human civil acts. (I say 'prevailing part' taking

¹⁶⁸ York, *Leagues of Nations*, pp. 64-69.

into consideration both the quantity and quality of persons in the community upon which the law is passed).¹⁶⁹

In this quote, Marsilius makes three things clear: First, that the legitimate cause of law, the 'legislator', is the "universal body of citizens", in contrast to divine law, natural law, or even Dante's "source of all authority". Secondly, that the legislator acts through elections or the general assembly of citizens, which is a clear nod to the city state, where a general assembly of citizens was feasible. Finally, his caveat, "or the prevailing part" is explained as being both quantitative and qualitative, and could thus either mean the majority decision, or the decision of the 'better' men, by which one would understand the aristocrats.

Marsilius' use of both a quantitative and qualitative base for rule, suggests a continuation of the Aristotelian ideal of mixed government that Cicero (and Polybius before him) had considered realised in the Roman Republic. Support for a mixed constitution is further seen in his description of the daily running of the executive power:

[A] Although the legislator, as the primary and proper cause of this, ought to determine which men should exercise what kind of functions in the city, nevertheless it is the princely part that commands, and if necessary enforces, the execution of such decisions, as he does other matters of law. [B] For it is more convenient for the execution of legal matters to take place through him than through the universal multitude of the citizens, since one or a few persons exercising the function of prince are enough for this business, in which the universal community would be unnecessarily occupied and would moreover be distracted from other necessary tasks.

[C] For when these individuals do something, the entire community does it: since those

¹⁶⁹ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 12, 3. pp. 66-67.

who exercise the function of prince do it in accordance with the determination (sc. legal) of the community; and because they are few or one in number, legal matters are more easily carried out¹⁷⁰

It is worth noting the set of constitutional points set out by Marsilius. First, section A is, at least in theory, very democratic, as it implies that the body of citizens should choose their officials, not in the abstract, as if he had said 'which class of men', but in the concrete 'which men' for 'which functions', as highlighted by the underlining. Section B then makes clear that executive power should be placed in the hand of one or a few people, because this delegation of power is more efficient than unbridled direct democracy and a few executives are sufficient for the job (see underlining). Finally, section C stresses that there is no disconnection between what the individual executive does, and what the community does, on the assumption that the executive is acting in accordance to the rules he has been appointed to administer. In addition to the previous points, Marsilius argued in favour of elective rather than hereditary princes,¹⁷¹ supported the possibility of stripping a prince of his office if he did not adhere to the laws,¹⁷² and even suggested that the office of prince could be time-determined as well as for life.¹⁷³ Not surprisingly, his ideas held appeal for 19th and early 20th century liberals, as one can read in a short American tract on Marsilius from 1920, *The Defensor Pacis of Marsiglio of Padua*, and indeed in York's *Leagues of Nations*.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 15, 4. p. 90. My underlinings.

¹⁷¹ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 9. pp. 43-50, and I, 16. Pp. 98-113.

¹⁷² Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 18. pp. 123-126.

¹⁷³ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 9. p.p. 47, 49 .

¹⁷⁴ E. Emerton, *The Defensor Pacis of Marsiglio of Padua. A Critical Study*. (Harvard University Press, 1920), York, *Leagues of Nations* (1919).

The prince of Marsilius was envisioned as an administrator, a bureaucrat even, whose job was to administrate the laws that had been established for the common good.

Discourse I, 17, elaborates the need for only one supreme 'principate', or government, per realm, which should hold authority over any lower principates, thus securing a clear line separation of their powers.¹⁷⁵ This has much in common with Dante's arguments in *Monarchia* on why the power should be gathered in one monarch, but unlike Dante, Marsilius specifically makes clear, that the principate should not per definition be understood as resting in one person only. For Marsilius, the principate is the executive function, which can be delegated either to one person or to a group of persons, who hold the executive function together.¹⁷⁶

In this administrative apparatus, the prince administers the laws by relying on the specialist knowledge of people called in to inform in a dispute, while his function is to apply the laws justly according to the evidence presented.¹⁷⁷ It will be seen in a later chapter that this perception has some similarities to Duncan Hall's ideas on the value of specialist boards to promote certain areas of knowledge and advise the administrations.¹⁷⁸

The basis of legitimacy and mixed constitution presented by Marsilius owed a clear debt to Aristotle and the political ideas of the Roman Republic. At the same time, his explicitly bureaucratic perception of government was well suited as a model for administration of the modern empires, and his co-option by early twentieth century writers can be seen in York's description of him as a "Liberal thinker and writer".¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 17, 1-2. pp. 114-115.

¹⁷⁶ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 17, 2. p. 115.

¹⁷⁷ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 10, 4-6. pp. 235-237.

¹⁷⁸ This is further developed in chapter 5.

¹⁷⁹ York, *Leagues of Nations*, p. 62. York capitalised the word 'Liberal', which appear mid-sentence, suggesting a very specific political orientation.

-Purpose of (Roman) Empire –

We must desire peace, seek to acquire it when we do not have it, keep it once acquired, and fight off its opposite, strife, with every effort.¹⁸⁰ (Marsilius)

This is the task to which that protector of the world must devote his energies who is called the Roman Prince. His office is to provide freedom and peace for men as they pass through the testing-time of this world.¹⁸¹ (Dante)

That the troubled thirteenth and fourteenth centuries should bring forth promoters of peace is hardly surprising and, as shown above, Dante and Marsilius both identified the church's assumption of temporal powers as the primary cause of strife. However, it is interesting to notice that the suggested solution was a strong empire. For Dante, it was based in his belief that a time of universal peace had indeed existed at the beginning of the Roman Empire:

At no time do we see universal peace throughout the world except during the perfect monarchy of the immortal Augustus. The fact that mankind at that time was resting happily in universal peace is attested by all the historians and the illustrious poets.¹⁸²

Dante's Augustus had, in the words of Marsilius, been the *Defender of the Peace*.

Dante also believed that the Romans had shown their worthiness of power, by their dedication to universal peace:

For that holy, pious and glorious people [the Romans] repressed all that greed which is harmful to the community, preferring universal peace and liberty; so much so that they

¹⁸⁰ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 1, 4 (p. 6).

¹⁸¹ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 3, XVI (p. 93).

¹⁸² Dante, *Monarchy*, book 1, XVI (p. 26). In fact one of his main sources is the Bible, as he assumes that Augustus held universal dominion based on Luke, 2, 1 stating that Augustus ordered all the world to be registered for taxes, and that the dominion was legitimate, since Christ let himself be born during the reign of Augustus and let himself be condemned by the Roman authorities (*Monarchy* book 2, XI. pp. 55-57).

seem to have sacrificed their own advantage in order to secure the general well-being of mankind.¹⁸³

Thus the Roman Empire was a divinely ordained leader of the world, populated by a uniquely noble people. This perception of the Romans being uniquely suited to universal leadership, through their cultural values such as liberty, self-sacrifice and the dedication to “the general well-being of all mankind” was exactly the same kind of self-perception in regards to the British people that in the early twentieth century made the imperialist-internationalists believe that the British Empire was a suitable model for the League of Nations. The world monarchy, or world state, that Dante was calling for was largely a restoration of *Pax Romana* by re-establishing the Roman Empire with Italian rule. In this perspective, Dante’s ideas appear less progressive, and more of a conservative wish to bring back a golden age when his own people ruled.

Marsilius, on the other hand, was more in the line of *translatio imperii*, though he only briefly referred to the concept.¹⁸⁴ It was the German Holy Roman Emperor who had his support, and it was the benefits of the well-governed realm that he wishes to restore, rather than the resurrection of the defunct Empire. He was ambivalent about whether there should be only one empire. On one hand, all his examples of how the early church had correctly accepted the authority of the secular power related to the Roman Empire, and he consistently used the Holy Roman Emperor as the example of the prince whose rights were infringed upon by the Pope. Likewise, his idea that the power to convene councils to determine matters of religious doctrine rests with the secular prince strongly suggests that he thought there should be only one prince, or

¹⁸³ Dante, *Monarchy*, book 2, V (p. 39).

¹⁸⁴ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 26, 6 (p. 453).

principate, with the power to convene such councils. And, finally, Marsilius specifically used the term “*the universal Roman Empire*” in discourse II in connection with his charge that the church is responsible for stirring up sedition.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, in the passage just referred to, Marsilius charged the church with stirring up sedition in “*all kingdoms*” and in the first discourse he specifically left the question unanswered as to whether there should be one or several empires:

As to whether it is appropriate for the universal body of those who live a civil life throughout the whole world to have one single principate that is supreme over all, or whether at any one time it is appropriate to have different such principates in different reaches of the world, separated almost of necessity by their geographical situation, and particularly in those which do not share a language and are very far apart in manners and custom; this being propelled by a celestial cause, to avoid the over-propagation of humanity; this is a topic for rational examination, but a different one from the present enquiry.¹⁸⁶

This open-ended acknowledgement that one could argue in favour of either one principate only, a world state, or of a diversity of states shows that at the very least Marsilius realised that it was an interesting topic, though it is not clear if he had read Dante’s *Monarchia*. It also shows that he found it unnecessary to his work, specifically calling it “a different one from the present enquiry” which he did not engage with any further.¹⁸⁷

It is tempting to read *Defender of the Peace* as a more practical proposal when compared with Dante’s more utopian ideas. Where Dante argued that a universal

¹⁸⁵ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, II, 21, 13 (p. 388).

¹⁸⁶ Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, I, 17, 10 (p. 120).

¹⁸⁷ It is also clear that Marsilius considered it essential for humans to spread widely across the world, to avoid acute scarcity of resources in any locality. The wide spread of humans having led to differences in both culture and languages would obviously make universal rule very complicated.

prince would be just for lack of things left to desire, Marsilius took a more sceptical approach and included the possibility of holding a prince to account if he had abused his powers, on the assumption that all men are corruptible, and that every so often a prince will make transgressions big enough for him to have to be suspended from office. It could well be practical considerations of a similar kind that kept Marsilius from throwing full support behind the idea of one world empire, as the practical reality of many existing states would make it highly improbable that world unity could be achieved. Nevertheless, the split between Dante and Marsilius in terms of the purpose of the Roman Empire is one of scope, rather than of aim. While Dante's scope was universal, Marsilius was willing to consider the possibility that peace should be obtained internally in a range of realms instead, though much of his writing clearly supports a very strong Roman Empire. In spite of that difference, it remains clear that both authors believed that the purpose of the empire was to secure peace and justice.

2.3 Modernity

While the previous sections have covered large periods of time, based on a small selection of sources, the eighteenth century was so full of peace proposals that it has been split into two periods here—that is the first and second half of the century—a division that represents a watershed in the development of ideas on empires and their role in securing perpetual peace.

The first section reviews a variety of proposals on perpetual peace, representing the views of some generally lesser known thinkers in the early eighteenth century from England, France and Italy, before finishing with a discussion of Rousseau's views on perpetual peace published in 1756. During this period it is argued that 'empire',

specifically in the tradition of the Roman Empire, was still a significant influence on ideas about how to organise internationally to secure lasting and even perpetual peace among the European nations. Compared to Dante's *Monarchia* and his idea of a World Empire, the early eighteenth century scope was, in some ways, more limited, as most projects specifically referred to the European sphere (though in some cases including the Turks and the Russians). However, given European colonial expansion into the Americas, and increasing penetration into Asia, it could be argued that a perpetual European peace would mean a wider peace around the colonial world.

This section then goes on to look at developments in the second part of the eighteenth century, focusing on a more decidedly British selection of texts, along with Kant's proposal for perpetual peace. The British texts selected are Bentham's proposal for peace, along with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and John Stuart Mill's *On Representative Government*. It is immediately noticeable that only two of the texts are peace proposals raising the question of why Smith and Mill are included here. It is argued that the American Declaration of Independence, which resulted in the United States becoming independent, put questions of empire and colonialism under critical review. The selected British authors stressed all the problems inherent in an imperial structure that was centralised and—importantly—gave different rights to its citizens depending on where in the empire they lived. As demonstrated in detail further on, these issues led to certain aspects of the empires being seen as causes of war rather than allowing them to act as defenders of peace. However, in spite of the criticisms against colonialism, the idea of the Roman Empire and *Pax Romana* as the main

relevant precedent remained very much alive in the discussions of international peace.¹⁸⁸

One of the conceptual problems in the debate about perpetual peace was the lack of a non-imperial framework of language. It was only in the late eighteenth century onwards that the words 'international', and 'organisation' first started to gain traction in their modern meanings. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* Bentham is mentioned as the first user of the word 'international' in his 1780 tract *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*.¹⁸⁹ Meanwhile, 'organisation' in the meaning of "An organized body of people with a particular purpose" is first traced to 1793.¹⁹⁰ On that background, it is tempting to speculate that the American Revolution and its impact on political ideas was really the starting point for reconceptualising the British Empire as an international organisation, in an attempt to salvage what was considered best of the institution.

The majority of the texts used in this section have all been printed in *Early Notions of Global Governance* by Esref Aksu,¹⁹¹ with the exception of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. Curiously, many of the translated editions used by Aksu are the same that appear in York's *Leagues of Nations*, which makes them particularly useful, as examples of the language used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁹² In

¹⁸⁸ See Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, pp. 74-77.

¹⁸⁹ "international, adj. and n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford University Press, September 2014).

¹⁹⁰ "organization, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

¹⁹¹ Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*.

¹⁹² One interesting example is the translation of Rousseau, where the original French *République Européenne*, is translated as 'Commonwealth of Europe' in the 1917 edition reprinted by Aksu (and York).

the case of Rousseau and Kant, editions in the original language have been consulted to compare with the language usage of the translations.¹⁹³

2.3.1 The early eighteenth century

The seventeenth-century wars, such as the Thirty Years War, the Turkish wars, and the English Civil War, combined with significant developments in political philosophy visible in the political tracts of writers like Hobbes and Locke to fertilize the ground for a new interest in questions of international order. Starting with William Penn in 1693, a whole string of proposals for perpetual peace were published during the eighteenth century, although by its end there was no longer any strong successor of the Roman Empire around. The Holy Roman Empire, though still existing, was an empire in name only with little real coercive power, and unlike the many absolute monarchs of the period, in his role as emperor the Holy Roman Emperor had little personal power.

The proposals for creating the basis for a lasting peace came from around Europe. The texts used here are William Penn, *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European Diet, Parliament, or Estates* (1693); John Bellers, *Some Reasons for An European State, Proposed to the Powers of Europe* (1710); Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *A Project for Settling and Everlasting Peace in Europe* (1713); Cardinal Alberoni, *Scheme of a 'Perpetual Diet' for Establishing the*

¹⁹³ J.-J. Rousseau, *Projet De Paix Perpétuelle*, in Collection complète des oeuvres, vol. 12, in-4° (Genève, 1780-1789). Online at <http://www.rousseauonline.ch/Text/projet-de-paix-perpetuelle.php> (10 Sept. 2014).

I. Kant, *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (1795). Online at <http://homepage.univie.ac.at/benjamin.opratko/ip2010/kant.pdf> (15 Feb. 2018)

Public Tranquillity (1736); and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Abstract' and 'Judgment' of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's Project for Perpetual Peace (1756).¹⁹⁴

As may be noticed, these texts come from both England, France, and Italy, indicating an interest in the topic across Europe. They all share some common ideas, primarily the formation of a common European 'diet', 'congress', 'Senate', or 'parliament' in which all the established countries and regions of Europe would have the right to representation. Actual representation should be arranged according to a formula, for which some made suggestions, and all agreed that the specifics should be settled in the actual negotiation of starting such a congress.¹⁹⁵

Some of the similarities are due to common sources. Bellers, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and Rousseau all referred to the *Grand Design of Henry IV*, and Cardinal Alberoni largely copied it. The *Grand Design* was published by the Duke of Sully in the years 1638 (first part) and 1662 (second part), the author claiming that Henry IV had masterminded the plan and had managed to get the agreement of Queen Elizabeth to his proposal.¹⁹⁶ It is now commonly assumed that the *Grand Design* was the work of Sully himself and that his claims about Henry's authorship and secret negotiations were fabricated, but none of the writers of the eighteenth century airs such suspicions.¹⁹⁷ Given that they used the *Grand Design* as proof that great monarchs

¹⁹⁴ All printed in Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*.

¹⁹⁵ W. Penn, *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European Diet, Parliament, or Estates* (1693), p. 29, J. Bellers, *Some Reasons for An European State, Proposed to the Powers of Europe* (1710), p. 42, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *A Project for Settling and Everlasting Peace in Europe* (1713), p. 64, Cardinal Alberoni, *Scheme of a 'Perpetual Diet' for Establishing the Public Tranquillity* (1736), p. 70, J.-J. Rousseau, 'Abstract' and 'Judgment' of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's Project for Perpetual Peace (1756), p. 109.

¹⁹⁶ D. Ogg (introduction), *Sully's Grand Design of Henry IV* (Sweet and Maxwell, 1921), pp. 28-29.

¹⁹⁷ Ogg, *Sully's Grand Design of Henry IV*, Introduction, pp. 3-13.

also had serious interests in a peace scheme, they had no motivation to doubt Sully's version.

In addition to their adherence to the *Great Design*, Rousseau—as the title of his work suggests—was using the work of l'Abbé de Saint-Pierre as the basis, and perhaps justification, for his own text. Though Rousseau has generously added his own thoughts, the core of the work of Abbé de Saint-Pierre remains. It is interesting to notice that Carr considered the work of Abbé de Saint-Pierre “one of the earliest schemes for a League of Nations”,¹⁹⁸ thus suggesting a very straight line of thought, not only from the mid-nineteenth century, but from the early eighteenth century and on to his interwar utopians.

- Importance of the Roman Empire-

Although the Roman Empire and its successors were almost gone, it remained the main reference for international peace and order into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *Grand Design* opened with a long tribute to the Roman Empire, including its own version of *translatio imperii* leading via Charlemagne to Henry IV, thus establishing both the credentials of Henry and of his plan.¹⁹⁹

In a different manner, Rousseau paid homage to the importance of the Roman Empire in giving much of Europe a common political heritage, and the ideal of a world of law, order and rights.²⁰⁰ He stressed the importance of the universality of political conditions across the Empire, writing:

when half of the known universe had passed beneath the same yoke, a common bond of laws and government was established, and all found themselves members of the

¹⁹⁸ Carr, *The Twenty Year's Crisis*, p. 25.

¹⁹⁹ Ogg, *Sully's Grand Design of Henry IV*, pp. 17-22.

²⁰⁰ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, p. 99.

same [Roman] empire. This bond was still further tightened by the recognized principle, either supremely wise or supremely foolish, imparting to the conquered all the rights of the conqueror; above all, by the famous decree of Claudius, which placed all the subjects of Rome on the roll of her citizens.²⁰¹

Rousseau insisted that the Empire had made its component parts “one body politic” in which “the mutual rights and duties of the ruler and the subject” were defined as clearly as possible.²⁰² Highlighting these lofty ideals, Rousseau treated the Roman Empire as a kind of precedent for a well-functioning modern state, implying that lessons could be learned from it when thinking about international order—although Rousseau himself did not want a restoration of the Empire.

Penn did not give a similar long tribute to the Roman Empire, but he considered one of the benefits of lasting peace to be the restoration of, “the ease and security of travel and traffic - an [sic] happiness never understood since the Roman Empire has been broken into so many sovereignties.”²⁰³ In this way, Penn too, validated the importance of the Roman Empire as a positive reference for international order in Europe.

It is worth noting, that while a century separated Sully and Rousseau, their arguments for the importance of the Roman Empire only seemed to be strengthened over time rather than weakened. When Rousseau’s description is compared that of Dante or Marsilius, he does not appear any less taken with the ideal of Rome than were his medieval predecessors. This reflects the fact that the Roman Empire had become an

²⁰¹ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, pp. 97-98. The edition does write Claudius, rather than the correct Caracalla.

²⁰² Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, p. 98.

²⁰³ Penn, ‘An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe’, p. 34.

ideal to the political philosophers that could guide contemporary reflection and practice rather than being seen simply in terms of the past.

-“the Germanic body”, using the *Holy Roman Empire* as a contemporary example-

The Roman Empire was not the only imperial example used in the early eighteenth century texts. The Holy Roman Empire was also a common framework of reference, consistently used as a positive example, in spite of its decline into insignificance.

However, it is interesting to notice that rather than calling it ‘the Holy Roman Empire’, Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Rousseau referred to it as “the Germanic body”, or “the German Union” when using it as an example,²⁰⁴ while Penn used the term “Empire of Germany”.²⁰⁵ This reluctance was reflected in a point made by Rousseau when he stated that: “Respect for the Roman Empire has so completely survived her power that many jurists have questioned whether the Emperor of Germany is not the natural sovereign of the world.”²⁰⁶ Avoiding the term ‘Holy Roman Empire’ was thus a way to avoid accepting the idea that *translatio imperii* made the German Emperor the heir to the power of Rome.

Nevertheless, the German Diet was directly and implicitly used as a model by Penn, Bellers, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Cardinal Alberoni, and Rousseau in their suggestions for a European assembly of some kind. This is seen both in direct references to the German Diet as a model for how a European assembly might be made, but also, more discreetly, in the prevalence of the use of the word ‘Diet’ as the name for the European assembly.²⁰⁷ Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Rousseau both made specific

²⁰⁴ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, pp. 96-97, 104, 110, 116; de Saint-Pierre, ‘A Project’, pp. 54-55.

²⁰⁵ Penn, ‘An Essay’, p. 29.

²⁰⁶ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, p. 121, note 1.

²⁰⁷ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, p. 26, pp. 107-110; J. Bellers, ‘Some Reasons’, p. 42; Alberoni, ‘Scheme’, p. 70; Saint-Pierre, ‘A Project’, p. 54.

references to the 'Germanic Body' or 'Germanic Union' as an example of functional international cooperation. According to Rousseau, in spite of its deficiencies, the Diet provided cohesion of its members, so that "there is not one of them, who would chose, even if he had the power, to win absolute independence at the cost of severance from the Empire."²⁰⁸ In this way, the theme of empires as organisations that provide structure and cohesion was continued, along with the notion that membership of the empires is something to be desired, and a privilege that no one would choose to lose.

This line of thought can also be seen in Penn's use of the word 'imperial' when formulating his organisational framework. Penn suggests an 'Imperial Diet' or 'Imperial Parliament' be created composed of 'Imperial States'.²⁰⁹ While Penn also uses the terms 'Sovereign Diet' and 'Sovereign States', it is the terms based on 'Imperial' that are predominant in his writing, suggesting that his international framework was naturally 'imperial' by virtue of joining a number of states under a higher international authority.

-Collaboration rather than World State-

Based on the German example, the idea expressed by many of the writers reviewed here was to create a European diet or assembly, in which the established powers were represented, and which would meet at regular intervals. This is the standard idea, going back to the *Grand Design*, though with some variations between the authors as to exactly how many representatives each state should have (for example Bellers suggested that Europe should be divided into 100 equal provinces, based on which the

²⁰⁸ Rousseau, "Abstract' and 'Judgment'", p. 110 and quote p. 116.

²⁰⁹ Rousseau, "Abstract' and 'Judgment'", pp. 26-27, 29-30.

right to representatives and duties of contributions should be calculated).²¹⁰ This Diet would have the power to make some common rules, settle disagreements, impose penalties on members who violated the agreements, and ultimately use physical force against unruly members.²¹¹ At the same time, it would be able to call up common support, to protect the 'Union' (Abbé de Saint-Pierre) or 'Confederation' (Rousseau) from outside attacks.²¹² In short, according to Rousseau, the states of Europe were to take on "the strength and firmness of a genuine body politic."²¹³

However, it would not be the purpose of the Diet to standardise the internal governments of the member states—in fact, it was commonly suggested that it would have the responsibility of supporting, even securing, status quo.²¹⁴ The member states were to remain independent units within the organisation, just as the German States were independent inside the Empire. This suggests that the writers discussed here thought in terms of cooperation between independent states—a principle so important to later international organisations—rather than of a world state (in spite of Rousseau's talk of one body politic). Penn specifically rejected the idea of a world state, saying of his proposed Imperial Diet:

This leads to the benefit of a universal monarchy, without the inconveniences that attend it, for when the whole was one empire, though these advantages were enjoyed,

²¹⁰ Penn, 'An Essay', p. 29; Saint-Pierre, p. 64; 'A Project', Alberoni, 'Scheme', p. 70; Rousseau, "Abstract" and "Judgment" p.109; Bellers, 'Some reasons', p. 42.

²¹¹ Penn, 'An Essay', pp. 26-27; Bellers, 'Some reasons', p. 42; Saint-Pierre, 'A Project', pp. 60-65; Alberoni, p. 70; 'Scheme', Rousseau, "Abstract" and "Judgment", pp. 106-108.

²¹² Penn, 'An Essay', pp. 34-35; Saint-Pierre, 'A Project', pp. 63-64; Alberoni, 'Scheme', p. 72; Rousseau, "Abstract" and "Judgment", p. 117.

²¹³ Rousseau, "Abstract" and "Judgment", p.106.

²¹⁴ Penn, 'An Essay', p. 32; Bellers, 'Some reasons', pp. 41-42; Saint-Pierre, 'A Project', p. 61; Rousseau, "Abstract" and "Judgment", p. 107.

yet the several provinces that now make the kingdoms and states of Europe were under some hardship from the great sums of money remitted to the imperial seat.²¹⁵

A key issue then, was the participation of all members in the decision-making process, creating, in the words of Rousseau, a federation where the interests of all members were taken into account and without an imperial centre as such.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century thus show a clear tendency to use the imperial models as a precedent while simultaneously trying to set up a new system where all participant parts had similar rights in the decision-making processes. This was clearly an issue to be followed up by the development of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, and by British thinkers up to the imperialist-internationalists.

2.3.2 The late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century

In spite of the generally very brief attention paid in this thesis to the historical context of the writers, it is worth stressing the crucial importance of the American Independence to both the political thinkers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, equally, to the imperialist reformers of the early twentieth century. For the imperialist-internationalists at the centre of this study it was the end of an epoch, the transitional moment that brought the British Empire from its first to its second stage,²¹⁶ and which provided a clear warning of what would happen to the Empire of the twentieth century if the lessons of 1776 were not taken to heart.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Penn, 'An Essay', p. 34.

²¹⁶ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 2-3, Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 9-10, p. 22.

²¹⁷ The fear of a repetition of the American Independence is a recurrent theme in Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*. The same opinion was held by a large number of the members of the Round Table movement, who originally considered Imperial Federation as an option to prevent a future break-up.

For Adam Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* was published during the push for independence, as well as for Bentham and Kant writing in the first decades after the event, and J.S. Mill writing with nearly a century's perspective, American Independence was proof of the limits of colonialism. Although both Adam Smith and J.S. Mill thought that largely speaking the English colonies had been treated decently by the English government, it was clear to all that the colonial system had failed to make the colonists feel like they had equal rights with their British 'brothers' across the Atlantic. Indeed most of the writers would admit that they had not. The American revolution had also demonstrated clearly that the supposed benefits of being part of an empire, even as a settler colony with a fair degree of local governance, were not so tempting as to make severance unappealing (as Rousseau had suggested was the case with the Holy Roman Empire). Nor did being part of the Empire prevent one part from going to war with another part, namely the mother country. The fact that trade between the new United States and Great Britain soon normalised to pre-independence levels were, if anything, an indication that colonialism was not even necessary to stabilise international trade.

-Late Eighteenth century anti-colonialism and universal peace-

Adam Smith wrote during the "present disturbances" in the American colonies without yet knowing their ultimate outcome,²¹⁸ but he was certainly clear about their direction. With a perspective more economic than political, he argued that, excepting

²¹⁸ A. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. Cannan (Methuen, 1904), book IV.7.73.

foreign trade, the settlers were “in every respect equal to that of their fellow-citizens at home, [...] secured in the same manner, by an assembly of the representatives of the people, who claim the sole right of imposing taxes for the support of the colony government” and in addition they enjoyed a greater degree of equality between them.²¹⁹ However, in spite of that apparent political equality, colonialism was bad for colonies, because of the effects of the mother country monopolising their international trade, which tended “to diminish, or, at least, to keep down below what they would otherwise rise to, both the enjoyments and industry of all those nations in general, and of the American colonies in particular”. This meant that in spite of the certainty of a market, all parties ended up the poorer for lack of a free flow of capital and ideas.²²⁰ Whatever the virtues of its internal government, colonialism, when tied to trade monopolies, was an economic loss for the colonies that they could not be expected to suffer willingly.

On the other side of the issue, Britain was likewise harmed economically by the consequences of the monopolies, irrespective of how much they might favour a few individuals, and additionally:

The European colonies of America have never yet furnished any military force for the defence of the mother country. Their military force has never yet been sufficient for their own defence; and in the different wars in which the mother countries have been engaged, the defence of their colonies has generally occasioned a very considerable distraction of the military force of those countries. In this respect, therefore, all the

²¹⁹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.73.

²²⁰ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.95.

European colonies have, without exception, been a cause rather of weakness than of strength to their respective mother countries.²²¹

Bearing the military cost in mind, colonialism was presented as an even worse deal for the mother country than for the colonies, as they were bound always to be an expense rather than a source of profit.²²²

Though Bentham did not directly refer to Smith, Bentham's 1789 *Plan for An Universal and Perpetual Peace*²²³ he clearly accepted the economic claims from the *Wealth of Nations*.²²⁴ Furthermore, he specifically argued, that the possession of colonies was the main cause of war in his time,²²⁵ and consequently considered "the emancipation of the distant dependencies of each state" one of his two fundamental principles for securing perpetual peace.²²⁶ His remedy was for Britain, and other colonial powers, to give independence to their dependencies, as that would, with one fell stroke, remove the bones of contention, all the while relieving the mother countries of an economic burden, and securing fairer and better political and economic life within in the former colonies.²²⁷ Smith had also considered the advantages of voluntarily giving up the colonies, which he thought included the probability of quickly (re-)establishing friendly relations such as those "which used to subsist between those of ancient Greece and the mother city from which they

²²¹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.98.

²²² Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.99. The negative evaluation of the economic impact of imperialism continued long after Smith. While Disraeli originally rejected the Empire as a millstone dragging the Britain down due to the costs of defending it, Leonard Woolf argued in 1920 that the trade of the colonies was simply marginal to British economy and economic imperialism was overall bad both for the colonized and the colonizer, much as Smith had argued before him. P. Wilson, 'Fabian Paternalism and Radical Dissent. Leonard Woolf's Theory of Economic Imperialism' in Long and Schmidt (ed.s), *Imperialism and Internationalism*, pp. 117-140.

²²³ J. Bentham, 'A Plan for An Universal and Perpetual Peace' (1789) in Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*, pp. 138-172.

²²⁴ Bentham, 'A Plan', pp. 141-142.

²²⁵ Bentham, 'A Plan', pp. 150-151.

²²⁶ Bentham, 'A Plan', p. 138.

²²⁷ Bentham, 'A Plan', pp. 143-44.

descended” as well as the economic advantages to both sides.²²⁸ However, he argued, “No nation ever voluntarily gave up the dominion of any province, how troublesome soever it might be to govern it, and how small soever the revenue which it afforded might be in proportion to the expense which it occasioned”,²²⁹ and thus this theoretically great idea was unlikely to be realised.

Kant, meanwhile, in his *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (1795),²³⁰ objected wholly to colonialism on moral grounds, stressing “the injustice which they [the European nations] exhibit on visiting foreign lands and races—this being equivalent in their eyes to conquest.” He emphasised the many ills of oppression, famine, disease and strife that the Europeans brought with them, as well as the contribution of imperial conflict to the continued wars in Europe.²³¹ With Smith, Bentham and Kant, a pattern of seeing colonialism as intrinsically bad, whether economically, politically, or morally presents itself. There is a clear divide between the British writers’ focus on settlers and economic and political considerations, and Kant’s moral focus on the negative impact of colonialism on the non-European populations, but all concluded that colonialism was an obstacle to peace.

-Suggestions for World Peace-

As demonstrated, one of Bentham’s main points was the need to emancipate the colonies, the other being the reduction of forces, especially standing armies.²³² The

²²⁸ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.152.

²²⁹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.152. A century and a half later, Zimmern would argue that the result of the Imperial Conference of 1926 as formulated in the Balfour Declaration, that stated the equality and autonomy of the Dominions, actually contradicted the expectation of Smith that control would never voluntarily be given up. A. Zimmern, “The Prospects of Democracy”; in Nations’ in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*, p. 337. The Article was based on a talk given in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nov, 1927.

²³⁰ Kant, ‘Perpetual Peace’ (1795) in Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*, pp. 180-229

²³¹ Kant, ‘Perpetual Peace’, pp. 193-194. Quote p. 193.

²³² Bentham, ‘A Plan’, p. 138.

second point will not be further discussed here, except to point out the obvious, that is has remained a fixture of most peace debates since. However, though not listed in his initial two main points, Bentham also raised the suggestion of creating a “Common Court of Judicature” to arbitrate when nations disagreed or felt their rights infringed on, in order to avoid such disagreements escalating into war.²³³ Bentham did not intend the court to have coercive power, but rather that “Its power would consist: (1) in reporting its opinion; (2) in causing that opinion to be circulated in the dominions of each state”.²³⁴ Accepting that this might not always be enough, Bentham added a third power, “after a certain time, in putting the refractory state under the ban of Europe”.²³⁵

It is worth noting, that Bentham was clearly envisioning a society of broadly liberal states, as he thought it best that “a clause guaranteeing the liberty of the press in each state” should be included in the creation of the court, to allow the free circulation of its judgements.²³⁶ Bentham’s court was thus supposed to depend on freedom of the press, combined with a freedom of speech (though he did not specify that), which would together allow an enlightened population to pressure its own government into following the judgement of the court. The importance of the enlightened population can also be seen in Bentham’s rejection of any kind of secret negotiations in foreign affairs. Essentially, Bentham appears to be setting up a liberal democratic paradigm, and his idea about the value of public opinion was to be broadly shared by many of those who later helped to form the League of Nations. It is indeed interesting to notice that Bentham, when speaking of his international court, returns in part to the imperial

²³³ Bentham, ‘A Plan’, pp. 153-154.

²³⁴ Bentham, ‘A Plan’, p. 157.

²³⁵ Bentham, ‘A Plan’, p. 158.

²³⁶ Bentham, ‘A Plan’, p. 158.

language, referring to the German Diet and speaking about the new 'organisation' that he wants to create as "a Congress or Diet".²³⁷

Kant's proposal has few obvious similarities to Bentham's, containing far more and more varied articles on how to procure a permanent peace. Nevertheless, certain similarities stand out. Like Bentham, Kant believed that an enlightened population with influence on the government was one of the best guards against war, "for in decreeing war, they would of necessity be resolving to bring down the miseries of war upon their country", miseries bound to fall upon the citizens themselves.²³⁸ On that account, Kant wanted all states to have a "republican" constitution, i.e. one that is based on the fundamental equality of its citizens, though he made quite clear that 'republican' was not synonymous with democratic, and in fact he considered it almost impossible for a democratic constitution to be 'republican', but entirely possible for a monarchic constitution to be so.²³⁹ Kant pleaded for the introduction of the rule of law in international relations, to pull international society out of its Hobbesian state of nature and instead create a "federation of nations".²⁴⁰ In an ideal situation, Kant argued, a "world-republic" gradually including all humans should be created, but since that would never be accepted, a "federation averting war" should at least be adopted.²⁴¹ Kant thus suggested a "covenant of peace" in which the republican member states would strive "merely at the preservation and security of the state for itself, and of the other allies at the same time".²⁴² Consequently, just as no state stood to gain anything from the covenant in terms of power or territory, likewise none stood

²³⁷ Bentham, 'A Plan', pp. 154-158, quote p. 157.

²³⁸ Kant, 'Perpetual Peace', p. 186.

²³⁹ Kant, 'Perpetual Peace', pp. 186-188.

²⁴⁰ Kant, 'Perpetual Peace', pp. 185 and 188-189.

²⁴¹ Kant, 'Perpetual Peace', p. 192.

²⁴² Kant, 'Perpetual Peace', p.191.

to lose, but all would gain by avoiding the miseries of war, which would make the desirability of permanent peace clear for all to see. Finally, Kant, like the writers of the early eighteenth century, stressed that “no state shall violently interfere with the constitution or administration and another”,²⁴³ a principle since adopted as a basic tenet of international relations.

When looking at Bentham and Kant’s suggestions for permanent peace, and comparing them to the debates in the formation of the League of Nations, it is clear that their ideas helped to shape the development of the ideas expressed by the imperialist-internationalists discussed in later chapters.²⁴⁴

-The reforming of the British Empire as a model for World Peace-

While Kant spoke of a world federation, Adam Smith had considered some sort of union of Great Britain and her colonies. Duncan Hall called Smith’s proposal “the most thorough scheme of Imperial Union” but insisted that “it is impossible to think that any of them would have dreamed of accepting it”.²⁴⁵ In contrast to the many political writers who had hailed the extension of Roman citizenship to Italians and later to barbarians, Smith argued that it had led to the end of the Roman constitution. He argued, however,

there is not the least probability that the British constitution would be hurt by the union of Great Britain with her colonies. That constitution, on the contrary, would be completed by it, and seems to be imperfect without it. The assembly which deliberates and decides concerning the affairs of every part of the empire, in order to be properly

²⁴³ Kant, ‘Perpetual Peace’, p. 183.

²⁴⁴ This is a point on which this thesis is in full agreement with Carr, who wrote that Kant and Bentham were the predecessors of the view that public opinion from a well-informed public would prevent war. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, pp. 25.

²⁴⁵ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 20.

informed, ought certainly to have representatives from every part of it. That this union, however, could be easily effectuated, or that difficulties and great difficulties might not occur in the execution, I do not pretend. I have yet heard of none, however, which appear insurmountable.²⁴⁶

With these words, Smith suggested a solution to the problem of colonialism that could be achieved without breaking up the Empire, by fully including the colonies into the greater whole and allowing them to have their own representation in Parliament, with perhaps some 50-60 delegates.²⁴⁷ What Smith had thus put on the table was the idea that an internal transformation of the Empire, granting fuller representation to its outposts, was a real (if hard to achieve) alternative to letting the Empire continue to exist as an uneconomic entity vulnerable to collapse because of internal resentments. The later Round Table and Imperial Federation movements would owe much to this analysis.

John Stuart Mill, in *Representative Government* (1861), dedicated the last chapter to 'The Government of Dependencies by a Free State'.²⁴⁸ The fact that more than sixty years separated Mill's writings from those of Smith, Bentham, Kant is important given that the British (and French) Empires had started expanding explosively into Africa, and that Britain had only three years earlier officially taken over the rule of India from the British East India Company. While Smith and Bentham had mainly referred to settler colonies, Mill and his audience were entirely aware of the two types of colonies within the British Empire. Mill openly divided the colonies into two different classes when it came to how they could and should be ruled. Like most men

²⁴⁶ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.163.

²⁴⁷ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV.7.163.

²⁴⁸ J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) in J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 447-467.

of his time, he accepted the idea that the coloured colonies were incapable of representative government, and that it was in the best interests of the native populations to be ruled by civilised Europeans acting like benevolent despots.²⁴⁹ His following section on how to secure the best rule for the natives under these conditions is interesting but of little relevance here.

Regarding the rule of the settler colonies, however, Mill took an entirely different view. Nearly a century after American independence, Mill held that

It is now a fixed principle of the policy of Great Britain, professed in theory and faithfully adhered to in practice, that her colonies of European race, equally with the parent country, possess the fullest measure of internal self-government. [...] The veto of the Crown and of Parliament, though nominally reserved, is only exercised (and that very rarely) on questions which concern the empire, and not solely the particular colony.²⁵⁰

The settler colonies, later to be named Dominions, were self-governing equals, albeit under control of the mother country in regards to foreign affairs. In fact, Mill held, the result was like a loose federation:

Every colony has thus as full power over its own affairs, as it could have if it were a member of even the loosest federation; and much fuller than would belong to it under the Constitution of the United States, being free even to tax at its pleasure the commodities imported from the Mother Country. Their union with Great Britain is the slightest kind of federal union; but not a strictly equal federation, the mother country

²⁴⁹ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 453-454.

²⁵⁰ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 448-449.

retaining to itself the powers of a Federal Government, though reduced in practice to their very narrowest limits.²⁵¹

In these glowing terms, the colonies were seen by Mill as having advantages that compared favourably to those of the former colonies that now made up the United States, and the fact of not having control of foreign affairs was suggested by him to be of small importance. However, small importance was not the same as no importance. Mill stressed that as long as Britain alone held the right to declare war, it had to cover the expense of war and standing armies, and could not legitimately ask the colonies to foot the bill for anything beyond their own immediate interests and defence, nor ask them to participate in wars that were did not concern their interests.²⁵² One solution might be, as Smith had suggested, to have an imperial parliament with representatives from the colonies, but Mill rejected the idea as unacceptable to anyone in Britain, as the colonial representatives could not know enough about British affairs to make their involvement reasonable.²⁵³ A better answer, he thought, was to make sure that "every office or dignity in the gift of the Crown" was available to the best men of the colonies, just as they were to the citizens of Great Britain.²⁵⁴ By showing that place of birth was no blocking stone for a man of quality, the people of the colonies would see that they had an opportunity of excelling within the Empire.²⁵⁵

Nevertheless, the challenge remained, why keep the Empire at all, especially considering the inequality that it was bound to confer upon its colonies? Mill's answer

²⁵¹ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, p. 449.

²⁵² Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, p. 452.

²⁵³ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 449-450.

²⁵⁴ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 453.

²⁵⁵ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 453.

would later be echoed by the imperialist-internationalists of the early twentieth century:

Though Great Britain could do perfectly well without her colonies, and though on every principle of morality and justice she ought to consent to their separation, should the time come when, after full trial of the best form of union, they deliberately desire to be dissevered; there are strong reasons for maintaining the present slight bond of connexion, so long as not disagreeable to the feelings of either party. **It is a step, as far as it goes, towards universal peace, and general friendly cooperation among nations.** It renders war impossible among a large number of otherwise independent communities.²⁵⁶

The British Empire, for Mill, was the defender of the peace, just as the Roman Empire had been in its time, and given the best possible democratic rule, it was a model to be followed.

2.4 Conclusions

The focus throughout this chapter has been on the European tradition of seeing empires as a constructive form of peaceful international organisation, helping to preserve the liberty of the citizens within its confines. Drawing a line from Greek antiquity through the Roman and Holy Roman Empires, and up to the mid-nineteenth century, it has been demonstrated that such a tradition did indeed exist. Though the ancient Greeks did not speak of empires as such, they still provided ideas of universality and models of colonial relations that helped shape later notions of Empire. Greek writers also expressed the notion that 'state' power depended on having the right kind of constitution – and that with such power came a responsibility

²⁵⁶ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 451, the highlighting is my own.

towards the weaker peoples under the protection of the hegemon. The Roman Empire then subsequently provided a precedent of universal citizenship and (theoretically at least) the rule of law which served as a model for many writers both in the middle ages and early modern periods.

In the Medieval debate about church and state, the importance of a separation between secular and ecclesiastic power was stressed by writers like Dante and Marsilius, who also argued that a well governed secular empire represented the best way to secure peace. The final part of the chapter then showed how the Holy Roman Empire, even when weakened, was held up as a model of international cooperation in the early eighteenth century. It also showed that although American Independence caused British thinkers to critically re-evaluate their ideas about colonialism, the fundamental idea that an empire (in this case the British Empire) could be used to secure universal peace began to attract attention—something later expressed strongly in the nineteenth century by John Stuart Mill. At the heart of this chapter, then, has been an attempt to show that the idea that empires could provide a basis for international peace has a long lineage, an idea that was still influential in the second half of the nineteenth century, at a time when the imperialist-internationalists received their education. The next chapter focuses on the education of the imperialist-internationalists in an effort to see in more specific terms the ideas and assumptions that shaped their own intellectual development and attitudes on questions of empire and peace.

3: The Classical Education and the formation of political ideas in the “group”

If the eighteenth century witnessed a growing interest in the concept and development of plans for perpetual peace, the nineteenth century brought a strong interest in using classical history as a model for thinking about contemporary issues facing Britain. As classics was the education of choice for the “best and the brightest”, the texts that were taught, and not least the way they were taught and the lessons drawn from them, had a significant impact on British public debate and politics at the time, across the political spectre, with competing interpretations of the lessons of antiquity being offered by conservative and liberal historians. Furthermore, the combination of these two developments—the increase of peace proposals and rise of classics—helped shaped the outlook of the imperialist-internationalists of the early twentieth century. The argument presented is therefore not that their classical education was in any way unique at the time, but that consciously and subconsciously it affected their view on the Commonwealth and the League, and that the fact that classics was a common part of curriculum for the higher educated classes, made it a natural framework of reference when arguing their causes, and it is therefore crucial to understanding the mind-set of the imperialist-internationalists.

While John Stuart Mill was given the final word in chapter two, it was his father, James Mill, along with Jeremy Bentham, who helped inspire one of the most significant nineteenth century contributors to Ancient Greek studies: George Grote. Grote’s twelve volume *History of Greece*²⁵⁷ was such a success that it continued to be regularly in print until at least 1909, with reprints of the 1909 edition appearing into

²⁵⁷ G. Grote, *History of Greece. Vol I-XII* (John Murray, 1846-1856).

the 1920s and 1930s. Abridged editions were on the market in the 1940s, and as recently as 2010 the whole twelve volume series was reprinted by Cambridge University Press. According to CUP's publicity material:

Widely acknowledged as the most authoritative study of ancient Greece, George Grote's twelve-volume work, begun in 1846, established the shape of Greek history which still prevails in textbooks and popular accounts of the ancient world today.²⁵⁸

In spite of Grote never attending university, his scholarly achievement was so universally accepted that he was given honorary doctorates by both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, in 1853 and 1861 respectively. It goes without saying that his *History of Greece* is among the works examined in this chapter, with the main focus being on Volume V, in which he covered the rise of the Athenian Empire until the end of the third year of the Peloponnesian War.²⁵⁹

This chapter demonstrates how the nineteenth century saw a change in the perception of ancient history in Britain, with a growing focus on using antiquity as illustrative of the nineteenth century present. Through a brief outline of Tory usage of Ancient Greek history after the French Revolution, followed by an analysis of the Radical-Liberal counter-analyses that dominated the latter half of the nineteenth century, it will be seen how narratives of ancient history helped to shape the perspectives of the imperialist-internationalists during their years as students. While both Ancient Greece and Imperial Rome were used as templates for the British Empire in the late nineteenth century, it will be argued that Imperial Rome and Sparta were most often

²⁵⁸ Cambridge University Press, 'Description', at <http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/classical-studies/ancient-history/history-greece-volume-12?format=PB&isbn=9781108009614> (9 Feb 2016).

²⁵⁹ The spelling Pericles will be used in the main text, as it has in the preceding chapter, but in quotes from Grote the spelling Perikles will be given in accordance to his usage, though missing the correct Greek accent over the final e that Grote applied.

favoured as a model by those of Tory inclination, while democratic Athens and Hellenism (not in the sense of a historic period) were the favoured by Radicals and Liberals. As was seen in the first chapter, most of the imperialist-internationalists belonged to this latter camp. And since a significant number of those belonging to the group of imperialist-internationalists studied classics, particularly at Oxford, this chapter will also focus on Classics education at Oxford from the 1880s down to the end of the century, the years in which Murray, Zimmern, and the rest took their degrees.

3.1 Classics in the early 19th century

It has been seen that this thesis rests on an understanding that the development of ideas is heavily dependent on the historical context in which they develop (even though considerations of space sometime make it hard to set down the context in much detail). This is no less true when examining how and why interest in antiquity shaped contemporary understandings of Britain in the nineteenth century. It has previously been argued that American Independence changed the way that some British writers thought about questions of colonialism. However, in the broader political view of the early nineteenth century, the French Revolution of 1789 and its consequences was at least as important in influencing political ideas. The threat of the overturn of all established order in the name of some uncontrolled mob-rule was famously the central theme in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, commonly considered a foundational text of the conservative principle. It also inspired William Mitford, a Conservative MP and man of independent means, to use the *History of Greece*²⁶⁰ he was writing to denounce the evils of democracy, using

²⁶⁰ W. Mitford, *History of Greece, Vol. I-V* (Cadell, 1784-1810).

Athens as a warning against the moral and political decay brought by democracy to an otherwise vibrant and successful state. Mitford also praised the virtues of autocratic rule as practiced in Sparta and Macedon, as best suited to secure the protection of personal security and property. Published between 1784 and 1810, Mitford's *History* was not a great piece of historical scholarship, but it was a powerful piece of partisan writing which was read by many Tory politicians, who regularly quoted it well into the 1820s.²⁶¹

The processes set in motion by the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution did not end with the fall of Napoleon, and conservative attempts to restore *l'ancien régime* did not prove successful, with radical-liberal forces pushing against conservatism in favour of reform and democracy both in continental Europe and Britain. The historiography of Ancient Greece in Britain was shaped by the waves of reform, and it was considered an important radical project to write an alternative history of Greece to counter the conservative interpretation by Mitford and others.

John Stuart Mill mentioned in his *Autobiography* that his father had presented Mitford's *History* to him as the best history of Ancient Greece on offer, though warning him of its dangerous tendencies,²⁶² and as T.H. Irvin points out in 'Mill and the Classical World' (1998),²⁶³ "the fact that the careful and well-informed James Mill could find nothing more suitable than Mitford for his son to read on Greek history shows why a history free of Tory prejudice would find some eager readers."²⁶⁴

If Ancient Greece was a model for contemporary Britain, it was a matter of political

²⁶¹ G.P. Gooch, *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century* (Longmans, 1913. 2nd ed. 1952), pp. 289-290.

²⁶² J.S. Mill, *Autobiography*. Preface H.J. Laski (Orig. 1873. Oxford University Press, Reprint with unpublished speeches 1924), p. 10.

²⁶³ T.H. Irvin, 'Mill and the Classical World' in J. Skorupski, *The Cambridge Companion to Mill* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 423-463.

²⁶⁴ Irvin, 'Mill and the Classical World', p. 426.

urgency that it was presented as a positive model for one's own political standpoint.

The question, however, was who would have the capacity to write a good counterpart to Mitford's *History* which, in spite of its inadequacies, was so eminently readable that Mill in spite of his father's warnings found it one of his favourite books.²⁶⁵

The circle around Bentham and James Mill saw the threat presented by Mitford's argument: that democracy had been tried and failed. Challenging that narrative was not an easy task, given that democratic Athens had ultimately been unable to defend itself from both demagoguery and defeat by the Macedonians. Additionally, Plato and Aristotle had argued against democracy as mob-rule, and democratic Athens had chosen to execute Socrates, one of the founders of western philosophy. The man chosen to challenge that narrative was found among the younger men in Bentham and Mill's inner circle. George Grote, who John Stuart called the man among his father's friends "with whom I most associated",²⁶⁶ had cultivated a strong interest in antiquity since he left school, in spite of having been put to work in banking at the age of sixteen. Grote's wife later noted that she had suggested her husband should write his own history of Greece in 1823, but Lionel Tollemache, who interviewed Grote in the 1860s, claimed that the suggestion came from James Mill, while Kyriacos Demetriou argues in *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy* (1999) that the project had been thought of several years earlier.²⁶⁷ All considered, it seems fair to assume that, irrespective of his wife's involvement, Grote was in fact encouraged by James Mill to take up the writing of a counterpart to Mitford. However, in spite of Grote's interest in the project, his obligations as both a banker and a leading Radical Member of

²⁶⁵ J.S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 10.

²⁶⁶ J.S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 61.

²⁶⁷ K.N. Demetriou, *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy* (Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 62-63.

Parliament (1832-41) left him insufficient time to finish any part of his planned history until after his retirement in 1843.²⁶⁸

At the universities the history of Greece and Rome became an official part of curriculum from 1830, though the actual curriculum was untouched by modern scholarship until the eighteen forties,²⁶⁹ strengthening the need for a Radical alternative to Mitford. More broadly, the early nineteenth century was marked by the introduction of examinations in Classics at Oxford and Cambridge between 1800 and 1824.²⁷⁰ This was the start of reshaping the classics curriculum into what it would become by the late nineteenth century, at a time when the imperialist-internationalists attended university, and classics at Oxford was the education of choice for the civil services.²⁷¹ At Oxford Aristotle was favoured over Plato, and Greek studies over Latin, though Latin, of course, was part of the curriculum.

3.2 Grote's *History of Greece*

It was in this context that Grote's twelve volume *History of Greece* started to be published. Grote aimed to repudiate Mitford's conservative view, by treating Athens as an example of the advantages of democracy and as a parable to the developing democratic system in Britain. The animus against Mitford does not have to be read

²⁶⁸ Connop Thirlwall, an old school friend of Grote, who had entered an academic career at Trinity College Cambridge, wrote a Greek History intended to challenge Mitford on a scholarly level, by applying modern approaches to professional historical scholarship. Thirlwall's history appeared in eight volumes from 1835 to 1844, but while it raised the bar on studies of Ancient Greek history it did not present a Radical counterweight to Mitford. See Gooch, *History and Historians*, pp. 290-291.

²⁶⁹ M.L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1959, reprint 2014), pp. 99-102.

²⁷⁰ Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*, p. 98.

²⁷¹ Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, pp. 185-193 demonstrates in clear figures as well as official preferences how dominant Oxford, and particularly Classical studies from Oxford, was in winning positions in the Civil Service, not least for the administration of India, from the second half of the nineteenth century and until about 1920 when its dominance started to wane significantly.

between the lines, as Grote made it quite clear within the opening lines of the preface to volume one:

The first idea of this History was conceived many years ago, at a time when Ancient Hellas was known to the English public chiefly through the pages of Mitford; and my purpose of writing it was to rectify the erroneous statements as to matter of fact which that history contained, as well as to present the general phænomena of the Grecian world under what I thought a juster and more comprehensive point of view.²⁷²

Given that Grote's *History* was unquestionably partisan—J.S. Mill supported it with his reviews—it is worth noting that it was, for its time, very good scholarship (it was as recently as 2000 hailed as, “the pre-eminent modern history of Greece in English; its main historical and political argument has not been superseded ... because it is based on care and close argument from the main literary sources”).²⁷³ In spite, or perhaps because, of Grote's lack of formal higher education, he was able to break away from some of the more stale aspects of Oxbridge classical scholarship of the time. Grote knew Greek and Latin well and had taken the time over the decades to closely study his sources, and he tried to approach them with proper source criticism, which allowed his work to be seen as authoritative rather than simply as a partisan answer to Mitford.

The years of publication coincided with the wave of democratic revolutions across Europe in 1848-1850, and rather than Mitford's warning example of the calamities of

²⁷² Grote, *History of Greece. Vol I*, p. iii.

²⁷³ Irvin, 'Mill and the Classical World', p. 428. The longevity and reputation of Grote's *History* is easily found in a variety of sources. More than a hundred years after its first publication, Grote remained in the bibliographies of leading classicists such as Moses Finley, who in his *The Ancient Greeks* (Penguin, 1963), p. 194, listed Grote's *History* as one on the few general histories in the bibliography, recommending it as “still rewarding reading”. Meanwhile, Anton Powell in his *Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek political and social history from 478 BC* (Areopagitica Press, 1988) writes in his introduction that “We may think of George Grote, whose general history, still unsurpassed, was conceived in the early nineteenth century as a massive Utilitarian tract”.

mob-rule, Grote presented Athenian democracy in positive terms. He praised the reign of Pericles,²⁷⁴ along with Demosthenes' opposition to Philip, and condemned Alexander as an autocratic despot who had ended democracy by means of violence. The scope of Grote's *History* is interesting in its own right as it shows his ideological as well as scholarly interests. Acknowledging the lack of even remotely verifiable sources for early antiquity, Grote nevertheless treated the start of the "real history of Greece with the first recorded Olympiad" in 776 B.C..²⁷⁵ More important for our purposes is his end point, 300 B.C., which was chosen on ideological grounds, since "after the generation of Alexander, the political action of Greece becomes cramped and degraded".²⁷⁶

The second half of volume five of Grote's *History* covers the rise of the Athenian Empire and the rule of Pericles until the middle of the Peloponnesian war, and provides a rich source for his opinions on democracy as well as on empire. Chapters such as Chapter XLV 'Grecian Confederacy under Athens' and XLVI 'Changes at Athens under Perikles'²⁷⁷ not only described the Athenian democracy of its time, but did so in a tone that made Grote's support for democracy clear. One of the famous issues of the period was Pericles' decision to build the so-called 'long walls' to defend Athens, which Grote considered a valuable and far-sighted measure, but which was opposed by the oligarchs (who as the richest men in Athens would have to provide most of the funding).²⁷⁸ Of this conflict Grote wrote that

²⁷⁴ See for example Grote, *History vol V*, pp.181-187.

²⁷⁵ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol I*, p. vii.

²⁷⁶ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol I*, p. x.

²⁷⁷ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, pp. 146-207 and pp. 208-262.

²⁷⁸ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 181.

The oligarchical opposition at Athens were so bitterly hostile to the Long Walls, to Perikles, and to the democratical movement, that several of them opened a secret negotiation with the Peloponnesian leaders; inviting them into Attica, and entreating their aid in an internal rising for the purpose not only of putting a stop to the Long Walls, but also of subverting the democracy.²⁷⁹

The whole paragraph accuses the oligarchs of betraying Athens to its enemies and encouraging an internal uprising against the legitimate democratic rule, moving the discussion away from whether democracy can secure good decisions or not and into the realm of oligarchs versus the Athenian people. Effectively comparing these ancient factions with his own time, Grote stated that “it was to this democratical party—the party of movement against that of resistance, or of reformers against conservatives, if we are to employ modern phraseology—that Perikles devoted his greatest rank, character, and abilities.”²⁸⁰ But if the democrats or “reformers” were represented by Pericles, a statesman of great vision, then the party of resistance, the conservatives, were represented by oligarchs who were so focussed on preserving their own privileges that they were willing to sell out their own city to Sparta, the main competitor of Athens (and, in the eyes of Grote, a bastion of conservatism). By using contemporary political names for the factions, Grote effectively condemned opponents of reform more generally.

Grote used the funeral oration of Pericles as the obvious choice to illustrate the ideals of the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C., though he appears to have assumed that the ideals were actually implemented to a higher degree than most modern authors would believe. His interpretation is strongly liberal as well as

²⁷⁹ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 183.

²⁸⁰ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 218.

democratic, and he focussed not only on the political rights of participating in decision making, but just as importantly on the right, under proper vigilance of the law, for the individual to act as they wished without undue interference by regulation or sour neighbours. It was of course this principle that John Stuart Mill put forward so powerfully in his 1859 *On Liberty*. According to Grote:

it is the pride of Athens to exhibit a rich and varied fund of human impulse --an unrestrained play of fancy and diversity of private pursuit, coupled with a reciprocity of cheerful indulgence between one individual and another -- and an absence even of those "black looks" which so much embitter life, even if they never pass into enmity of fact. This portion of the speech of Perikles deserves particular attention, because it serves to correct an assertion, often far too indiscriminately made, respecting antiquity as contrasted to modern societies --- an assertion that the ancient societies sacrificed the individual to the state, and that only in modern times has individual agency been left free to the proper extent.²⁸¹

It is clear that Grote stressed that this meant that democratic Athens supported the rights of the individual compared to the state, and he continued to explain its importance, stating that the toleration in Athens of "individual impulse, taste, and even eccentricity" helped to explain the "striking career of Sokrates" (denounced by others as "democratical licence").²⁸² With his focus on individual liberty, which he considered best aligned with democracy,²⁸³ Grote argued that the emergence of Greek philosophy showed that democracy was best-suited to providing growth for the

²⁸¹ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 411.

²⁸² Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 412.

²⁸³ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 413, "That liberty of individual action, not only from the over-restraint of law, but from the tyranny of jealous opinion, such as Perikles depicts in Athens, belongs more naturally to a democracy, where there is no select One or Few to receive worship and set the fashion, than to any other form of government. But it is very rare even in democracies."

development of new ideas. The charge of “democratical licence” was therefore simply an empty insult against people who wanted the possibility of progress.

While Grote’s defence of liberalism and democracy was the least to be expected, it is also interesting to note his views on the empires of Athens and Alexander. In view of the last section of Chapter 2, which looked at the views of Smith, Bentham and J.S. Mill on Empire and peace, it should come as no surprise that Grote also had an ambivalent attitude towards the concept of Empire. On one hand, as a Radical he was sceptical of Empire inasmuch as it tainted the character of the imperial people as well as its subjects. In the case of Athens and its former confederates of the Delian League, Grote suggested that the relationship transformed the lesser city states “from allies free, meeting at Delos, and self-determining –into subjects isolated, sending their annual tribute, and awaiting Athenian orders. [...] And what was still worse, it altered the reciprocal relation and feelings both of Athens and her allies—exalting the former into something like a despot, and degrading the latter into mere subjects.”²⁸⁴ The establishment of Empire degraded not only the smaller city states but also Athens herself, whose democratic nature appeared to be perverted, at least as far as intercity relations were concerned. However, Grote also suggested that for the Athenians the two principles of democracy and empire were distinct and compatible, “altogether the exercise of empire abroad became a prominent feature in Athenian life, and a necessity to Athenian sentiment, not less than democracy at home.”²⁸⁵ Though he did not make the specific comparison, it seems reasonable to read these statements as a reflection on Britain in the mid-nineteenth century as much as on Athens in the fifth

²⁸⁴ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 198.

²⁸⁵ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 272.

century B.C.—that is as a defence of the principle that a democratic state can exist in an imperial setting.

Grote also noticed something that Adam Smith had said, namely that “It would have required a more self-denying public morality than has ever been practised by any state, either ancient or modern, even to conceive the idea of relinquishing voluntarily an immense ascendancy as well as lucrative revenue: least of all was such an idea likely to be conceived by Athenian citizens, whose ambition increased with their power, and among whom the love of Athenian ascendancy was both passion and patriotism.”²⁸⁶ It was a sentiment later echoed by Zimmern in the *Greek Commonwealth* when he wrote that, “Athens could no more step back than most Englishmen feel they can leave India. She had woken up to find herself an Empire and was resolved to play the part.”²⁸⁷ Achieving Empire, for Athens as for any other country, Britain clearly included, appeared to be like falling into a trap, where the walls were made of the sense of glory and honour that no nation would want to give up. However, in spite of Grote’s rather sceptical evaluation of the impact of obtaining Empire on Athens and the Athenians—or, perhaps, on Britain and the British—he did not follow Bentham into any call for an end to all empires. He instead provided arguments in favour of the Athenian Empire including the idea that empires could be effective in securing peace.

It was seen in Chapter 2 that Rousseau believed no member of the Holy Roman Empire, or Germanic Body as he called it, would wish to leave since the value of complete independence was less than the advantages lost by being member of it.

²⁸⁶ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 156. Smith, as quoted in chapter two, stated that no province was ever voluntarily given up irrespective of how problematic or valueless it might be (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1904), book IV.7.152).

²⁸⁷ Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth* (Clarendon Press, 1911, 5th edition 1931), p. 194.

Rather in the same vein, Grote argued that in spite of the position of dependency in some cases being forced upon them, “to the weaker allies, the breaking up of the Athenian empire would have greatly lessened the security both of individuals and of commerce, in the waters of the Ægean, and their freedom would thus have been purchased at the cost of considerable positive disadvantages.”²⁸⁸ The parallel to the British Empire was at times made directly, and certainly tended towards defending the imperial position. For the origin of the change from the Delian League into the Athenian Empire, Grote wrote that “the military force of these subject-states [of the Delian League] was thus in a great degree transferred to Athens by their own act, just as that of so many of the native princes in India has been made over to the English.”²⁸⁹ It was an example that seemed in one stroke to justify the development of imperial power in Ancient Athens and contemporary Britain. In a more discreet comparison, Grote highlighted the following aspects of importance in Athenian imperialism:

Professing complete mastery of the sea, and every sort of superiority requisite for holding empire over islands, Athens had yet no sentiment to appeal to in her subjects, calculated to render her empire popular, except that of common democracy, which seems at first to have acted without any care on her part to encourage it, until the progress of the Peloponnesian war made such encouragement part of her policy.²⁹⁰

Grote’s focus on “mastery of the sea” and “common democracy” as the sole bonds of empire was a precedent tailor-made for British imperialists of a more liberal persuasion.

²⁸⁸ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 311. For the relevant quotes from Rousseau, Rousseau, ‘‘Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’’, p. 110 and quote p. 116.

²⁸⁹ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 155.

²⁹⁰ Grote, *History of Greece. Vol V*, p. 296.

It should be made clear, that any support of Grote's for Empire, lukewarm or not, was contingent on its promoting the democratic form of government. Close to the end of his *History*, in volume XII, when writing on the end of Alexander, Grote, having declared that Alexander was trying to apply Persian despotism to the Greeks and Macedonians rather than spreading Hellenic political traditions in Asia, stated that,

Though the philosopher's [Aristotle] full suggestions have not been preserved, yet we are told generally that he recommended Alexander to behave to the Greeks as a leader or president, or limited chief –and to the Barbarians (non-Hellenes) as a master: a distinction substantially coinciding with that pointed out by Burke in his speeches at the beginning of the American war, between the principles of government proper to be followed by England in the American colonies, and in British India. No Greek thinker believed that the Asiatics would be capable of that free civil society upon which the march of every Grecian community was based. Aristotle did not wish to degrade the Asiatics below the level to which they had become accustomed, but rather to preserve the Greeks from being degraded to the same level. Now Alexander recognised no such distinction as that drawn by his preceptor.²⁹¹

It is interesting to notice, that apart from censoring Alexander for not being willing to listen to Aristotle's advice about maintaining the free tradition of the Greeks, Grote also implicitly appears to accept the argument that the Europeans should have a different rule than the "Asiatics". This was of course similar to J.S. Mill's argument, presented in Chapter 2, that representative government was only relevant for the settler colonies.

In summary, it is fair to say that Grote's *History* presented a strong defence of Athenian democracy, and though certainly not uncritical of the concept of Empire in

²⁹¹ Grote, *History of Greece, Volume XII*, pp. 87-88.

general, he nevertheless in some aspects defended the Athenian Empire as well (not least by noting that many of the weaker subject cities has originally submitted voluntarily to Athenian control). And, by a string of direct and indirect comparisons, Grote can be read as implying that the British Empire could also by and large be seen as a beneficial force. His rejection of Alexander's Empire was largely based on the premise that it undermined democracy (though Grote appeared to agree with the notion that democracy is only really achievable for people of European descent). Grote's more attentive readers cannot have failed to understand some of the parallels between the Athenian age and their own.

3.3 Classics in the late 19th century

-Grote, Jowett, and Green-

The publication and reception of Grote's *History* was a watershed in the British interpretation of Ancient Greece, and with the ongoing developments in the Classical education it soon became standard a standard read at Oxford University—as well as other universities—for those who wished to consult “modern authorities” when doing Ancient history.²⁹² There can be little doubt that Grote's *History* still dominated the understanding of Ancient Greek history when Murray and Zimmern studied at Oxford. According to one former student, the archaeologist G.B. Grundy, as late as 1889 the lectures in Greek history were either “merely precis of Grote” or “destructive criticism of Greek authors”.²⁹³ Zimmern, in his *Greek Commonwealth*, clearly assumed that any reader would be familiar with Grote. In his discussion of the

²⁹² W.H. Walsh, 'The Zenith of Greats' in M.G. Brock & M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, vol. VII, Part 2* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 312. Additionally, on p. 316, Spooner is quoted as having read Grote while at Oxford in the early 1860s. Also, O. Murray, 'Ancient History, 1872-1914' in Brock & Curthoys, *The History of the University of Oxford*, p. 335.

²⁹³ Murray, 'Ancient History, 1872-1914', p. 351.

development of Athenian democracy, Zimmern suggests that "it is wholesome for the idealist to lay aside his Grote and his Mazzini and turn over the pages of an election issue of *Punch*",²⁹⁴ indicating that not only does he expect you to have—mentally at least—a Grote to lay aside, but that as a rational liberal you might realise that Grote was occasionally too idealist.

Grote followed up on his *History* with the publication of *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates* (1865), in which he debated Plato's life, scholarship, and his place among other philosophers, not least the "sophists", of his time. Like his *History*, Grote's *Plato*, revised many existing interpretations of history, noticeably arguing that Socrates and Plato belonged in the tradition of the sophists, rather than being a separate (and better) class apart from them. He also criticised Plato's authoritarian tendencies, while holding some of his ideas up as evidence of support of the freedom of thought and some basic utilitarian ideals.²⁹⁵ The long-term impact of this piece of scholarship can be seen in Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies, Vol. I* (Routledge, 1945) on Plato, where he frequently referred to Grote.

Grote's work on Plato was timely, as the earlier focus on Aristotle alone had been superseded by a renewed interest in Plato. At Oxford, William Sewall had started to lecture on Plato during the 1830s, and by the 1840s he was succeeded by Benjamin Jowett, who was to become a major influence on classics at Oxford for the next forty years. Jowett produced a string of popular translations of Plato, though the quality of his scholarship was often questioned, and was a dominant figure as both tutor and Master of Balliol College, where he nurtured promising students and helped them into

²⁹⁴ Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth* (1931), p. 140.

²⁹⁵ A good analysis of Grote's *Plato* can be found in Demetriou, *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy*, pp.187-244.

significant public careers (helping to secure Oxford dominance in the Civil Service).²⁹⁶

Jowett openly acknowledged his debt to Grote as a leading authority within the area, though not without his faults. His preface to *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. I* (1871) is worth a lengthy extract:

I have also derived much assistance from the great work of Mr. Grote, which contains excellent analyses of the Dialogues, and is rich in original thoughts and observations. I agree with him in rejecting as futile the attempt of Schleiermacher and others to arrange the Dialogues of Plato into a harmonious whole. Any such arrangement appears to me not only to be unsupported by evidence, but to involve an anachronism in the history of philosophy. There is a common spirit in the writings of Plato, but not a unity of design in the whole, nor perhaps a perfect unity in any single Dialogue. The hypothesis of a general plan which is worked out in the successive Dialogues is an after-thought of the critics who have attributed a system to writings belonging to an age when system had not as yet taken possession of philosophy.

If Mr. Grote should do me the honour to read any portion of this work he will probably remark that I have endeavoured to approach Plato from a point of view which is opposed to his own. The aim of the Introductions in these volumes has been to represent Plato as the father of Idealism, who is not to be measured by the standard of utilitarianism or any other modern philosophical system. [...]

I cannot agree with Mr. Grote in admitting as genuine all the writings commonly attributed to Plato in antiquity, any more than with Schaarschmidt and some other German critics who reject nearly half of them. [...] It will be seen also that I do not

²⁹⁶ 'Jowett, Benjamin (1817–1893)' *DNB*. Symonds, *Oxford and Empire* (1986), Chapter 10, pp. 184–202, uses Jowett as a prime example of Oxford Dons actively seeking public appointments for their graduates.

agree with Mr. Grote's views about the Sophists; nor with the low estimate which he has formed of Plato's *Laws*; nor with his opinion respecting Plato's doctrine of the rotation of the earth. But I 'am not going to lay hands on my father Parmenides' [Soph. 241 D], who will, I hope, forgive me for differing from him on these points. I cannot close this Preface without expressing my deep respect for his noble and gentle character, and the great services which he has rendered to Greek Literature.²⁹⁷

As may be noticed, Jowett rejected both some specific points of scholarship (e.g. discussion of the canon of Plato) and several of the more controversial points of Grote's interpretation (evaluation of sophists, connecting Plato to utilitarianism, and rejecting parts of Plato such as the *Laws* as authoritarian), and yet highlighted Grote for his "excellent analysis", "original thoughts" and "great services ... to Greek Literature". All in all, this lengthy tribute to Grote, some two thirds of the preface, clearly demonstrates that by 1871 Grote was the authority to both acknowledge and challenge within British studies on Ancient Greece and Plato. Even as late as 1891, in the preface to the second and third edition of his *Dialogues*, Jowett still found it necessary to defend his choice to differ from Grote in the original work.²⁹⁸ Another noticeable element of Jowett's preface to the first edition was his statement that the point of his work was to present Plato as the father of Idealism, a philosophical line of thought continued and strengthened by one of Jowett's pupils, Thomas Hill Green.

T. H. Green (1863-1882), took a first in Greats from Balliol College and became lecturer of Ancient and Modern history in 1860. From 1878 he was professor of moral philosophy, developing his own version of Hegelian idealism, although he died quite early, at the age of 45, he became very influential at Oxford, not least in the years

²⁹⁷ Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol I*, translated by B. Jowett (Oxford University Press, 1871. 3rd ed 1892) pp. xi-xii.

²⁹⁸ Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol I*, pp. xvi-xix.

following his death and the posthumous publication of his *Nachlass*. His ideas remained influential throughout the final decade of the nineteenth century.²⁹⁹ The impact of Green's philosophy was acknowledged by H.A.L. Fisher, friend and contemporary student at Oxford with Gilbert Murray, who in his *Unfinished Autobiography* wrote that: "There was one book, inspired by Hegel, to which we were introduced from the first and which made a deep impression on my mind. T.H. Green died in 1883, but his powerful influence survived. His *Prolegomena to Ethics* served as introduction to morals."³⁰⁰

In the *Prolegomena* Green wrote, among other things, about the relationship between the individual and society or the state, arguing that individuals can only see themselves as persons through their interactions with others. Without a community, there can be no persons, nor any morals. The concept of the higher "good" is defined on the basis of being a common good, and "It is in fact only so far as we are members of a society, of which we can conceive the common good as our own, that the [divine] idea has any practical hold on us at all, and this very membership implies confinement in our individual realisation of the idea."³⁰¹ Similarly, he argued, the society or state could contain no good that was not contained in its members,³⁰² so bettering the population would better the whole, but that without society people would have no morals to aim at in the first place. His idealism was openly elitist, stating that, "the moral judgment at its best in any age or country [is] in those persons who are as purely interested in the perfection of mankind and as keenly alive to the conditions of

²⁹⁹ 'Green, Thomas Hill (1836–1882)', *DNB*.

³⁰⁰ H.A.L. Fisher, *An Unfinished Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 50.

³⁰¹ T.H. Green, *T.H. Green. Lectures on the principles of political obligation*, edited by P. Harris and J. Morrow (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 255.

³⁰² Green, *T.H. Green*, p. 256.

that perfection as is then possible".³⁰³ This evaluation of the best moral judgement, along with Green's general focus on progress, clearly called for clear-sighted people to take action, not only for their own people or society, but indeed for mankind, irrespective of the station of the fellow men "who in undeveloped possibility, and in the claims which arise out of that possibility, are all that he himself is."³⁰⁴ In this view, then, the state was the essential framework to allow any human to realise themselves as humans, and it was not only an option but an obligation for the elite to serve the state by taking charge and setting an example that would lead society to a higher level of enlightenment or "perfection". It was a line of thought that can clearly be traced back to Plato's *Republic* with its system of enlightened Guardians as the rulers of society.

Green's call to action appeared to support Jovett's cause of sending Oxford men off to the Civil Service, and his ideas inspired people such as Millner and his Kindergarten, the founders of the Round Table movement: "The philosophic idealism of T.H. Green caused them to view the State as a positive moral good and to see social improvement and reform as a duty."³⁰⁵ That view was consistent with Gilbert Murray's long affiliation with public education, such as the Oxford Extension courses, originally championed by Jowett and later supported by Green, as well as his editorship of the Home University Library series.³⁰⁶ It was also more broadly consistent with the ambition of men like Murray and Zimmern to apply themselves both to the

³⁰³ Green, *T.H. Green*, p. 280.

³⁰⁴ Green, *T.H. Green*, p. 283.

³⁰⁵ Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, p. 65.

³⁰⁶ J. Stapleton, 'The Classicist as Liberal Intellectual: Gilbert Murray and Alfred Eckhard Zimmern' in Stray, *Gilbert Murray Reassessed*, pp. 268-275.

development of ideas and through public service to help bring those ideas to fruition.³⁰⁷

-Classics at Oxford-

The shift in the way the Classics were studied at Oxford was not only in terms of ideals. From 1850 Oxford University introduced separate examinations in Moderations and Literae Humaniores, and the study of ancient history became a larger and larger part of the curriculum, along with philosophy and composition and verse. The texts most read in philosophy were those of Plato, particularly *The Republic*,³⁰⁸ and the *Ethics* and *Politics* of Aristotle.³⁰⁹ With Jowett's focus on Plato and Green's emphasis on idealism, it is easy to underestimate the continuing influence of Aristotle, but in fact an Oxford Aristotelian Society was founded in the 1880s, bearing testament to his ongoing importance.³¹⁰ In history the most read works were the perennial classics—Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus—with Grote the modern author of choice for the study of Greek history. Composition typically focused on Homer, Virgil, Demosthenes, and Cicero.³¹¹ Homer was particularly favoured by Gladstone, who believed that Oxford students should be reading the entire works of Homer for their four years of study, as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together in his view constituted “a complete course of Mods and Greats in themselves, containing a ‘world of religion and ethics, of civil policy, of history and ethnology, of manners and arts’”.³¹² As late as 1886, Gladstone was still reading the *Iliad*, which he

³⁰⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 1, Morefield's *Covenants without Swords* looks at the Hegelian influences on Murray and Zimmern, much of which would have come through the legacy of Green.

³⁰⁸ The choice of the *Republic* strongly suggests that Jowett's positive interpretation, rather than Grote's more critical interpretation of Plato's *Republic* was in favour.

³⁰⁹ Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*, p. 113.

³¹⁰ Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*, p. 118.

³¹¹ Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*, pp. 113-114.

³¹² R. Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Blackwell, 1980), p. 201. Jenkyns is quoting Gladstone.

referenced copiously in his published writings.³¹³ Homer's works were indeed popular in the late nineteenth century, not only at university level, but also at the public schools, and would be very familiar to any educated man irrespective of his later line of studies.³¹⁴

In some ways, it appears that the connection from prep to Oxford was too strong, at least to some people's liking. In his *Unfinished Autobiography*, Murray writes that, "I was in some ways disappointed in my first experience of Oxford. I had expected so much; new lights on life, new learning, enlightenment and philosophy. I found, on the contrary, much the same influences as I had felt at school."³¹⁵ Not only was there a general shortage of new ideas, he also found Oxford broadly speaking at variance with his political leanings as a Liberal: "all my classical teachers up to that time had been orthodox Conservatives with no interest in the problems and aspirations and crusades that excited me," with the noticeable exception of his moderations tutor, Arthur Sidgwick, a "real straightforward Liberal" with whom he had long and frank discussions.³¹⁶ Murray's contemporary, H.A.L. Fisher, had other favourite teachers to remember, but discreetly also suggests that Oxford started off underwhelming, commenting that "my undergraduate years at Oxford were not among the happiest of my life. [...] The Oxford climate did not appear to suit me, and I felt slightly out of sorts during much of the time."³¹⁷ Of Jowett, still active, he commented that, "the bright star had lost some of its earlier shine. [...] His lectures on pre-Socratics, though

³¹³ Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, pp. 199-200.

³¹⁴ 'Homer and the Homeric Ideal' in Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, pp. 192-226.

³¹⁵ G. Murray, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, edited by A. Toynbee and J. Smith (Allen & Unwin, 1960), pp. 87-88.

³¹⁶ Murray, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 86. Sidgwick was to have a rather important part in Murray's life, as he introduced Murray to the Howards, thus paving his way into marrying the landed gentry.

³¹⁷ Fisher, *Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 45.

marked by shrewd observations, were desultory; his private teaching was marred by the tendency to settle big controversies by a phrase or an epigram".³¹⁸ In spite of his positive comments on some tutors, Fisher felt it necessary to excuse himself by stating that, "I would not, however, leave the impression that I am ungrateful to my Oxford lecturers. They taught me much," a claim that seems at best to damn with faint praise.³¹⁹

However, Fisher did indeed praise his favourite lecturers, not least Alfred Robinson, who lectured on logic and Aristotle's *Ethics*. Fisher's interest in ethics has already been mentioned in connection with his highlighting of Green as an introduction to morals, but in his autobiography he otherwise rejected the Hegelian influences that he declared dominant at Oxford in the 1880s:

it was the fashion among all our instructors to pull J.S. Mill to pieces and consign Herbert Spencer to the nethermost pit. My own Philistine proclivities led me to think more highly of both Mill and Spencer than my tutors would have approved, but I succeeded at catching the Hegelian phraseology and was prepared to reproduce it in examinations.³²⁰

As a young man of mildly Liberal leanings, his preference for Mill and Spencer was natural, and his description supports Murray's claim that Oxford was something of a desert for Liberals. However, given that Fisher's autobiography was written in 1939-40, when war with Germany had recently broken out again, it is also possible that Fisher overstated his own rejection of the dominant Hegelianism at Oxford in his

³¹⁸ Fisher, *Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 52.

³¹⁹ Fisher, *Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 55.

³²⁰ Fisher, *Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 50.

youth in order to suggest a consistent rejection of German ideals going back to before World War I.

On balance, then, it seems fair to suggest that to young men of a Liberal bent, Conservatism rather than Liberalism was dominant at Oxford. A 1984 biography of Murray by Francis West shows that most of Murray's friendships were with other liberals, both dons and students,³²¹ suggesting that liberals at Oxford had their own social circle even though it was not a formal grouping. While the dominance of Grote's *History* had settled the standard interpretation of democratic Athens as a model for democracy, rather than an argument against it, his works do not seem to have convinced the majority of the Oxford Dons to apply a liberal interpretation to Plato or indeed to philosophy in general.

-Rome as a model 1880-1900-

So far, then, this chapter has exclusively focused on the study of Ancient Greece in the classics curriculum, both because of Murray and Zimmern's lifelong use of Hellenism as a model for great issues, and because of the repeated comparisons between the Greek and the British colonies and empires (however much or little historical sense such comparisons really made). As shown in Chapter 2, though, the Roman Empire also served as a point of reference and comparison for many of those interested in drawing parallels with the past.³²² In *Hegemonic Peace and Empire. The Pax Romana, Britannica, and Americana* (2009), Ali Parchami makes a thorough analysis of the concept of 'Pax' and its inherent militaristic overtones, as well as its

³²¹ F. West, *Gilbert Murray. A Life* (Croon Helm, 1984), p. 21.

³²² Though there are some exceptions to this rule. While Zimmern dominantly compared the British Empire to Ancient Athens, in 'The Things of Martha and the Things of Mary' first published in *Century Magazine* in 1923, he compared the British and the Romans, the British Empire and the Roman Empires, as exceptional cases of international statesmanship. Zimmern, 'The Things of Martha and the Things of Mary', pp. 97-100.

connection to the Greek concept 'Arche',³²³ which again relates to issues of command. Because his focus on the British Empire in the late nineteenth century is on the *Pax Britannica*, Parchami naturally focusses on the use of Rome as a model for the Empire, showing how it often served as a counterpart to Hellenism. Where conservative thinkers like Burke and Mitford had linked the French Revolution to the concept of democracy and mob-rule, more liberal thinkers, who favoured Hellenism, rejected that connection, citing the French Revolution's "self-identification with the Roman Republic".³²⁴ On this view, Rome was the model of tyranny, with the end of the Republic leading to despotic imperialism (paralleled in the case of France by the rise of Napoleon). From a Liberal perspective, the Roman Empire and 'Imperialism' was therefore in some sense 'suspect', encouraging a focus on the Ancient Greeks, as in Gladstone's promotion of Homer at Oxford.

For the Conservatives, however, the Roman Empire became an increasingly attractive model to promote a vigorous British Empire, in spite of Disraeli's earlier rejection of the colonies as "a millstone round our neck".³²⁵ From the 1870s, Disraeli actively promoted the comparison between the Roman and the British Empires, with initiatives such as making Queen Victoria Empress of India in 1876, and promoting the image of Britannia in celebration of Britain's Empire. *Pax Britannica* became a conservative cause to be carried on well into the twentieth century, with its robust, militaristic interpretation of imperial duty. Claiming the inheritance of the Roman Empire for Britain made sense, in the 1870s, when one considers that the concept of the Roman

³²³ Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, chapter 1, pp. 15-30.

³²⁴ Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, p. 67.

³²⁵ Disraeli, letter to Lord Malmesbury, 13 August 1852. "Benjamin Disraeli." In *Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations*, edited by A. Jay (Oxford University Press, 2012). <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199572687.001.0001/q-author-00002-00000457>.

Empire still held political currency in Continental Europe, where the newly unified Germany and Italy were both laying some claim to the Roman mantle (Italy from location, Germany from position of power). The Tory argument became a continuation of *translatio imperii*, with the British Empire as the latest successor to a long and honourable tradition. But when Disraeli quoted Tacitus saying that “*Imperium et Libertas* [...] would not make a bad programme for a British Ministry”, Gladstone replied that it meant “Liberty for ourselves, Empire over the rest of mankind”.³²⁶

Although somewhat simplistic, in these basic terms the battle lines between the conservative and the liberal view on the Roman Empire may well be laid out, and they reflected a perception of fundamental difference in views of Empire that became represented by the split in attitudes towards the Greek and the Roman model. The Greek model, favoured by the Liberals, was considered to be based on culture, democracy, and knowledge, rather than on of brute force (a utopian view as Carr might say). The Roman model was far more robust, the realist view, perhaps, with a focus on the material factors that made the Empire successful: a model that highlighted the victories of the Imperial armies across the globe and the ideology of *Rule Britannia*³²⁷ as a demonstration of the worthiness of the British Empire.

3.4 Conclusions

As this chapter has shown, the historical treatment of Ancient Greece, especially democratic Athens, underwent a significant change during the nineteenth century, as liberal thinkers like Mill and Grote emphasised the value of the democratic tradition

³²⁶ Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire*, p. 72.

³²⁷ The lyrics of *Rule Britannia*, though written in 1740, are a fine representation of Imperial ideology clearly based on brute force to secure peace.

both in its Hellenistic setting and for the modern world. Yet Greek philosophy was still typically interpreted and taught in a conservative manner, creating a somewhat uncertain ideological climate for those like Murray, Zimmern, Fisher and other young men who were educated at Oxford in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In the case of Murray, his autobiographical writings say nothing of Rome, except to offer praise for his tutor of Latin language and literature, instead emphasising how his interest was dominated by the study of Ancient Greece.³²⁸ Fisher too, made only passing mention of a good tutor of Roman History, while his Greek studies received his most developed comments.³²⁹ Both by way of curriculum and published recollections, it seems evident that the Greek rather than Roman studies dominated the Classic studies at Oxford in the last decades of the nineteenth century, even as in public life the Roman model was gaining ascendancy. It will be seen in the following chapters that both lines of thought influenced the attitudes of the imperialist-internationalists towards the new Empire/Commonwealth and the League of Nations in the years after World War I.

³²⁸ Murray, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 90.

³²⁹ Fisher, *Unfinished Autobiography*, pp. 54-55.

4: The British Empire as an international organisation

From the purely formal point of view the Imperial Conference of 1926 denotes a surrender of power, probably the greatest surrender of power ever made by any single government at any single moment. But in light of political reality, it represents a leap forward in the organisation of the British Commonwealth from an eighteenth-century to a twentieth-century system.³³⁰

Zimmern, 1929

The transition from Empire to Commonwealth in the years after World War I was, depending on one's perspective, either a ground-breaking move forward for political ideas and international relations or a rather irrelevant renaming of old wine emptied into new newly labelled bottles. This chapter analyses how the imperialist-internationalists re-envisioned the British Empire as a kind of international organisation, renamed it, and pushed for political recognition of their new *status quo*.

The first section examines the impact of World War I on intra-imperial relations, illustrating the importance of considering the historical context for the ideological developments. It demonstrates how a common agreement was being reached that the Dominions should, in fact, be considered fully autonomous and—at least theoretically—of equal status to Great Britain (in practical political terms breaking with the model of a centrally governed empire). It will be seen how the imperialist-internationalists used the impact of the War to promote their agenda, pushing for public recognition that the Empire had already changed into a type of organisation that could not be categorised as an empire any more. Additionally, it will be seen how already in 1914 they saw the War as presenting an opportunity for creating a stronger

³³⁰ Zimmern, 'The Prospects of Democracy', p. 337.

basis for international cooperation in the long run. Furthermore, this chapter also analyses the views of the imperialist-internationalists in regards to whether the new structure of the Empire/Commonwealth was the result of a particular English/British genius, or whether Englishness was a coincidental feature that should not be stressed. This debate is analysed with particular attention to Murray, Smuts and Zimmern, suggesting that while the dominant opinion was that British culture was essential to the whole Commonwealth project, Zimmern in particular believed that too strong a focus on 'Englishness' as an essential quality would undermine the entire basis of the whole project.

The second section of this chapter then analyses the re-naming of the Empire as the British Commonwealth of Nations, showing how the question was bound up with a very conscious attempt to reformulate what kind of political structure the Empire/Commonwealth both was and should be after World War I. The analysis draws upon aspects of Discourse Analysis, specifically Discourse-Historical Analysis,³³¹ in investigating how the imperialist-internationalists sought to impose their interpretation of the Empire by determining how it should be renamed. This section also uses more traditional historical methods to show the prevalence of the use of the word "commonwealth" both in translations of political texts and more broadly in late nineteenth and early twentieth century newspaper discourse (necessary to put the term "Commonwealth" into a broader perspective). It is a central argument of this section that the imperialist-internationalists were consciously aiming at controlling the agenda by setting up the suggested re-naming of the Empire as the *de facto* reality, repeatedly speaking about "the British Commonwealth of Nations"³³² as an existing

³³¹ M. Reisigl & R. Wodak, 'The Discourse-Historical Approach' in R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (Sage Publication, 2nd ed. 2009), pp.93-94.

³³² My underlining, to stress the presentation of the Commonwealth as a definite entity.

entity and as *the* new name of the Empire, in spite of the fact that it would take decades before the name “British Empire” actually faded from official use and the term “Commonwealth” became dominant.

While this chapter uses a wide range of sources, one speech deserves special mention since it repeatedly turns up in the analysis. On 15 May 1917, Smuts was the guest of honour at a dinner offered by the House of Lords, which was attended by members of both Houses of Parliament. After a toast in Smuts' honour had been offered by Lord French—an opponent of Smuts in the field during the Boer War—Smuts replied with a lengthy speech that set out his vision for the British Empire “which I prefer to call “the British Commonwealth of Nations.””³³³ Virtually the whole speech is of relevance to this chapter, as well as to this thesis in its entirety, as it is an extremely clear formulation of Smuts' ideas and policies as he promoted them in 1917. The version used in this chapter is the one published in *The Times* on 16 May 1917 in their report of the dinner. The full article includes the toast of Lord French, and most of Smuts' speech, though only a summary of one section in which he spoke about the system of Imperial Conferences. The importance attached to the speech can be seen both in the headline given to the article in the *Times*, “The Empire of the Future”, and in the fact that the paper continued to refer to the speech in articles for days afterwards, including an editorial on 19 May 1917. Likewise the *Manchester Guardian* reported on the speech on 16 May and in several articles afterwards, while Hall quoted it in his *British Commonwealth of Nations* of 1920, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* uses a quote from the speech to illustrate the introduction of the concept ‘the British Commonwealth of Nations’. The frequent, and frequently

³³³ Smuts, speech 15 May 1917. From “The Empire Of The Future.” *The Times*, 16 May 1917, p. 7.

lengthy, quotations from that one single speech do not, therefore, indicate a lack of alternatives, but rather reflects the fact that the speech was and is of great relevance to the topic at hand.

4.1 Defining the Empire as an international organisation

As was shown in Chapters 2 and 3, the concept of empire had been under attack and re-evaluation since the Declaration of American Independence, and was by the late nineteenth century by no means an uncontroversial term. From Benjamin Disraeli's rejection of the colonies as a "millstone around our neck" —an economic perspective similar to Adam Smith's—to the radical charge of imperialism as inherently immoral, the basic concept of "empire" had become problematic. The debate across the political spectrum made the term "Empire" increasingly less appealing for politicians and others who wanted the institution to progress without hanging on to the negative conceptual baggage of "Empire".

The creation of the Dominion of Canada in the British North America Act of 1867, the Federation of the Australian colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, and the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 had all confirmed the new position of the white self-governed colonies (New Zealand included) as something more independent than traditional colonies – something recognised in the first instance by referring to them as "Dominions". However, not only were they growing increasingly politically independent, two of the Dominions, namely Canada and South Africa, had large European populations of non-British origin, the French-Canadians and Afrikaners, who could not be expected to feel a natural loyalty to the British Empire. Re-defining and re-naming the Empire—as well as the concept of Britishness itself—was also a question of securing their present and future loyalty.

The example of the introduction of the concept of “Dominions” shows the awareness in intra-imperial politics of the importance of names. In legal statute, there was no definition of a “Dominion”, it was neither more nor less than a different name used for a sub-set of the British colonies. However, in practical terms, it was generally acknowledged that the Dominions were different from the rest of the colonies, in as much as they were fully self-governed in internal affairs, and could be expected to express strong opinions on foreign policies that impacted their interests. Canada, in particular, had shown interest in taking over the control of its relations with the United States. Though the transition was slow and gradual, the Foreign Office was beginning to take notice. In the same way that it was accepted that the white colonies were no longer regular colonies, and should not be called colonies if cohesion of the Empire was to be maintained, it was increasingly suggested that the Empire of mother country, Dominions, and Colonies was no longer a traditional empire, and should therefore be renamed if the institution was to survive.

In short, the name “Empire” had become potentially toxic, while simultaneously being considered at least partially misleading as a label for the kind of institution that the British Empire had become by the end of World War I. In words of Duncan Hall,

These developments may be summed up by saying that a complete change has been wrought in the meaning of the term “British Empire” since 1914. In 1914 it signified a central government surrounded by a number of more or less dependent States; in 1919 it signified a new type of political association, namely, a group of autonomous States organised on a basis of complete constitutional equality under a common Crown.³³⁴

³³⁴ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 195.

4.1.1 The impact of WWI on intra-imperial structure

Few issues in this thesis are as uncontroversial as the claim that World War I marked a change in intra-imperial relations between Britain and the Dominions. Certain basic historical facts are clear. At the start of the war, most of the Dominions declared that they were *de facto* at war the moment Great Britain declared war, because, in their interpretation, the declaration of the mother country automatically meant that all its colonies, Dominions included, were at war. Australia and New Zealand therefore declared their state of war not as a conscious decision, but simply as an affirmation of an already existing condition, entirely dependent on the decision of the United Kingdom government that had declared war on behalf of the British Empire.

However, when World War I ended, the Dominions were independently represented at the Peace Conference, and were given independent membership of the League of Nations from its creation in 1920. A look into wartime developments reveals how much the imperialist-internationalists were part of shaping these changes rather than simply being passive observers responding to things that were outside their control.

A brief comment is in order here about terminology. During World War I and the Interwar Period it was more common to speak about inter-imperial relations than intra-imperial relations but, logically speaking, 'inter-imperial relations' should refer to relations between the various empires, while 'intra-imperial relations' refers to the relations between the various parts of the specific empire. Therefore, this thesis consistently uses the formulation intra-imperial, except when quoting any text that used 'inter-imperial' in its original version.

-Perceptions at the beginning of the War-

As already mentioned, the decade and a half preceding the start of World War I had seen significant changes to the structure and official perception of the predominantly white colonies now known as Dominions. Though the development went back to the British North America Act of 1867, it was the federation of Australia and formation of the Union of South Africa that really emphasised that the principle that full self-governance was applied to all the settler colonies, rather than applying just to Canada as a specific measure to prevent another American declaration of independence.

World War I was not therefore the cause of the development of Dominion autonomy, but rather a catalyst that accelerated the process of developing a new institutional framework, along with official and indeed public recognition of the new conditions.

When the War started, Duncan Hall was still studying at the University of Sydney, Gilbert Murray was well established as Professor of Greek at Oxford, Alfred Zimmern was working under H.A.L. Fisher at the Board of Education, and Jan Smuts was one of South Africa's leading politicians, second only to Botha in his position in government. With the exception of young Hall, all soon took action that would mark out their course for the War. Murray surprised many by abandoning his general pacifism in favour of a strong defence of the war-effort. Smuts along with Botha drew South Africa firmly into the War alongside the Empire that had so recently conquered them. Zimmern at first did something rather less ostentatious, issuing a second edition of *The Greek Commonwealth*, his classics success from 1911. Although the second edition had been in progress before the War broke out, Zimmern took the opportunity to address recent international developments in his Preface to the 1914 edition, dated 2 December 1914:

While this book has been passing through the press war has broken out, bringing Great Britain face to face, for the first time since she became a Democracy, with the

full ultimate meaning of civil responsibilities, both of thought and action, with which, in the narrower field of the City-State, the fifth-century Athenians were so familiar. Greek ideas and Greek inspiration can help us today, not only in facing the duties of the moment, but in deepening and extending the range and the meaning of Democracy and Citizenship, Liberty and Law, which would seem to be the chief political task before mankind in the new epoch of history on which we have suddenly entered.³³⁵

A few points are worthy of note in this quotation. The first is that Zimmern only referred to Great Britain without any comment on the Empire, though in later sections of the book he drew comparisons between Athens ("the Athenian Empire") and the British Empire,³³⁶ and too much should not be made of the omission. The second point is Zimmern's willingness to use "Greek ideas and Greek inspiration" for his own times, specifically on the topics of democracy, citizenship, liberty, and law, which reinforces the view presented in chapter 3, that the classical education of the imperialist-internationalists was relevant to their world view. The third point to note is that Zimmern considered the start of the War a "new epoch of history" in which building democracy and law are the main political task not only for Britain but the whole world. This sentiment was further developed on page 98 of the *Greek Commonwealth*, which Zimmern in the 2nd preface mentioned as a page where he had expanded the comments to reflect the situation of 1914. A paragraph relating to arbitration in the chapter on 'The City Magistrate' concludes:

³³⁵ Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 6.

³³⁶ Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 194, 196, 202. The whole idea of naming Athens of the 5th century as an "Empire" in itself suggests a willingness to draw comparisons to Zimmern's contemporary empires.

City law has abolished fisticuffs, as some day, when mankind has become conscious of a common citizenship in the world and a common need for World-Law, the World-State will abolish war.³³⁷

Combined with the comments in the Preface, it is reasonable to conclude that Zimmern already a few months after the start of World War I saw the War as an opportunity to make political changes on a worldwide scale. Following up on his *Greek Commonwealth*, Zimmern included the terminology “the British Commonwealth of Nations” in his 1914 article “German Culture and the British Commonwealth”,³³⁸ suggesting that he saw a parallel between the fifth-century Athenian state that he named “the Greek Commonwealth”³³⁹ and the newest form of the British Empire that he was calling “the British Commonwealth”. In the introduction to the book of collected essays of which his article was a part, Zimmern defined Commonwealths of Nations as “States composed, like the British Empire and the United States, of a variety of nationalities and cultures”,³⁴⁰ while the article “German Culture” not only referred to this new concept of ‘the British Commonwealth’ in its title but also repeatedly throughout the text, which also introduced the full formulation “the British Commonwealth of Nations”.³⁴¹ Later in the article, similar to his call for a world-state, was his call for the creation of a world-commonwealth in due time. In contrast to his comparisons between Ancient Athens and Britain, he aligned German culture with Sparta and Rome, citing its “governmental disciplinary machine”,³⁴² and by association its military dictatorship,

³³⁷ Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 98.

³³⁸ A. Zimmern, “German Culture and the British Commonwealth” (1914), reprinted in R.V. Seton-Watson et al, *War and Democracy* (Macmillan, 1915), pp. 348-382.

³³⁹ It is incidently interesting to notice that Grote, at least once, used the expression “the Athenian commonwealth” in his *History, Vol V*, p. 410.

³⁴⁰ A. Zimmern, “Introduction”, in Seton-Watson et al, *War and Democracy*, p. 11.

³⁴¹ Zimmern, “German Culture and the British Commonwealth”, p. 371.

³⁴² Zimmern, “German Culture and the British Commonwealth”, p. 357.

using the ancient parallels to promote or condemn contemporary states. While Zimmern's later involvement in the drafting of the British proposal for the League of Nations did not try to propose a world-state or world-commonwealth, his *League of Nations and the Rule of Law* from 1936 continued to promote the idea of world-law as an essential road to world peace.

While Zimmern aimed to use words to advance his ideas, Smuts and Botha did it through actions. The decision to bring South Africa into the War on the side of the British Empire was certainly not the only possible choice when World War I broke out, given that many Afrikaners were sympathetic to the Germans, and saw the War as a possibility to break out of the Empire while British forces were elsewhere engaged. Other, more moderate, voices assumed that a course of neutrality was the obvious choice for the Union, as the sympathies of the population were obviously split, and the cause and aims of War seemed too far removed from South African interests to make participation a sensible option. Smuts, however, used the War as an opportunity for South Africa, and specifically himself, to become an active participant in shaping the future of the Empire. When the Botha government declared war on Germany on behalf of South Africa, Smuts resumed his old role as a general, and by leading South African forces against German interests in Africa boosted his own political capital in Great Britain (though he put his popularity among Afrikaners under strain). As a former enemy turned defender of the British Empire, Smuts built up a unique platform for being heard in London, as it allowed him to formulate the case for the Empire while retaining some of the authority of an outside observer. Smuts already had many friends in England from his years at Cambridge, and he was well known within the Round Table movement given its origins in South Africa, and his

actions and speeches gave them the chance to promote him as a man of singular vision as regards the future of the Empire.

Smuts' letters and speeches from the first year of the War yield an insight into the way he both privately and publicly presented his views, and, when combined with mentions of him in the House of Commons and British newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, shows how his platform was being built. A couple of his letters written shortly before and after Britain's entry into World War I—both otherwise unrelated to the War—end with a paragraph dedicated to the new situation in Europe. In a letter dated 30 July 1914 to his friend H.J. Wolstenholme, Smuts wrote that "I do hope it will be possible to stave off a general conflict which is bound to put Europe back fifty or more years and to bring untold suffering and loss in its train."³⁴³, while his letter of 21 August to Sir Benjamin Robinson stated that "This war is terrible business, which may put Europe and white civilization permanently back and hasten the day of the yellow peril. Our European system has pent up and focussed force which no man can control, and so the end has come."³⁴⁴ As can be seen, both letters express Smuts' grave concern about the situation, not least on its impact on European civilization and its position relative to Asia, but neither letter mentions the Empire at all.

By late September 1914, however, Smuts consistently supported the Empire and promoted the official South African line that when Britain declared war South Africa was automatically so, too. He argued that not only did the country not have a choice, but also insisted that it had a moral obligation to fight, as shown in the open letter in which he reproachfully accepted General Beyers' resignation as head of the South

³⁴³ Hancock and van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume II*. No. 582, Letter to H.J. Wolstenholme, 30 July 1914, p. 181.

³⁴⁴ Hancock and van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume II*. No. 589, Letter to Sir B. Robinson, 21 August 1914, pp. 190-191.

African forces.³⁴⁵ The letter was published both in South Africa and in Britain, where papers as different as the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* printed large selections, openly praising his arguments. The following selection from the open letter shows why:

You forget to mention that since the South African War the British people gave South Africa her entire freedom under a Constitution which makes it possible for us to realise our national ideals along our own lines, and which, for instance, allows you to write with impunity a letter for which you would without doubt be liable in the German Empire to the extreme penalty.

As regards your other statements, they have been answered and disposed of in Parliament. From these discussions it will be apparent that neither the British Empire nor South Africa was the aggressor in this struggle. War was in the first instance declared by Austria-Hungary, and thereafter by Germany, under circumstances in which the British Government employed its utmost powers to maintain the peace of Europe and to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium. [...] Under these circumstances it is absurd to speak about aggressive action on the part of the Union, seeing that together with the British Empire we have been drawn against our wish and will and entirely in self-defense into this war.³⁴⁶

Even if the arguments were in the first instance intended for a South African audience, they gave a ringing endorsement of the principles of the British Empire and of its reasons to go war, while his previous wish for Britain to stay out of the conflict given his concern for European civilization had disappeared entirely.

³⁴⁵ General Beyers had voiced his objections to South Africa getting actively involved in the War and resigned over the decision to invade German South West Africa. He wrote a public letter of resignation, but Smuts managed to keep it out of print, until he could publish his rebuttal alongside the letter. Beyers went on to become one of the leaders of the armed rebellion against South Africa's involvement in the War.

³⁴⁶ "General Beyers Exposed." *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1914, p. 7.

Smuts' private correspondence supported the new line. In a letter to another of his English connections, Arthur Gillett, dated 27 September 1914, he wrote that:

I don't think England could have done otherwise then, nor could she without infamy have backed out now. I love German thought and culture and hope it will yet do much for mankind. But a stern limit must be set to her political system which is much a menace to the world even worse than Bonapartism was. [...] We are also fighting in the awful desert of German South West Africa and will lose many valuable lives there. But such was the wish of the English Government and Botha and I are not the men to desert England in this dark hour. Many Boers cannot forget the past and bitterly disapprove our action. But I think we are doing our duty.³⁴⁷

While the tone varies from the political to the reflective, it is clear that the sentiments expressed could perfectly well be published without harm to Smuts' reputation in England in 1914.

Smuts's position was positively noted in the House of Commons. In a discussion about Ireland and its possible role in the Empire and the War, published on September 16 1914 in *The Times*, John Redmond referred to Botha and Smuts stating: "General Botha and General Smuts have been able to say that the concession of free institutions to South Africa has changed men who little more than 10 years ago were your bitter enemies into your loyal comrades and fellow-citizens in Empire".³⁴⁸ South Africa was set up as an example of the benefits of applying the liberal principles of the Empire to potentially hostile parts of it. With such public sentiments, Smuts cemented his reputation as not only a military leader but also a vocal defender of the Empire.

³⁴⁷ Hancock and van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume II*. No. 598, Letter to A.B. Gillett, 27 September 1914, pp. 201-202.

³⁴⁸ "House Of Commons." *The Times*, 16 Sept. 1914, p. 9. One may compare Redmond's comments, with the Livy's speech of Camillus quoted in chapter 2, on the benefits of securing peace through conferring citizenship, and thereby political rights, on conquered people.

Professor Murray, like Smuts, took a strong and clearly considered position at the start of the War. Between late July and the actual declaration of war, Murray had, like many of his regular correspondents, signed an open letter protesting that Britain should stay out of the conflict. But, like Smuts, Murray changed his opinion shortly after war was declared, following his attendance at a debate in the House of Commons where he heard Sir Edward Grey, the minister of Foreign Affairs, defend Britain's participation. Much to the dismay of many of his pacifist friends Murray quickly became a staunch defender of the British war effort. His change of heart was probably genuine, but a private letter to his friend H.A.L. Fisher suggests that it was also strategic. On 10 August 1914, Murray wrote:

It seems to me to be important that the liberal feeling in England should keep fully in touch with the war ... for the sake of the peace settlement afterwards... If we win, as seems on the whole probable, we must do our very best of a generous treatment of Germany... I think we should also go for a strengthening of the Concert and reducing armaments by treaty.³⁴⁹

This little segment suggests a fairly cynical approach or at least one based on *Realpolitik*: support the War for the sake of influencing the peace or become irrelevant by alienating public opinion. Murray's focus on a generous settlement for Germany appears foresighted, given the strong debates and struggles that took place when the Peace Treaty was negotiated, and his intention of using the War to "strengthen the Concert and reducing armaments by treaty" shows how he already had ideas and insights that were natural predecessors of his subsequent involvement with the creation of the League of Nations at the end of the War.

³⁴⁹ Murray to H.A.L. Fisher, August 10 1914. Murray, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, pp. 110-111.

When taken together, it seems fair to conclude that Zimmern, Smuts and Murray all had a clear idea in 1914 about the potential long-term impact of World War I, both on the future of the Empire and the international order more broadly. They all took public stands that helped to set them up as active participants in the political debate during the war years.

-Using the progression of the War and setting the agenda-

As the War dragged on, the Dominions continued to contribute fresh supplies of men and materials, demonstrating that they were active participants in the Empire. As shown in Chapter 2, J.S. Mill had argued many decades earlier that since the power to declare war rested with the British Parliament alone, the expenses of war should also rest with Britain, and could not be extracted from the self-governing colonies without their consent. While the Dominions accepted Britain's declaration of war was binding on themselves, and contributed significantly to the costs of running the war effort beyond their own defence, they unsurprisingly also sought increased participation in the decision making process regarding war and peace and other big issues of foreign policy. The creation of the Imperial War Cabinet in 1916 was one of the consequences, acting as a symbol to show the Dominions that they were being heard. As Botha was fully occupied in South Africa, he appointed Smuts as his representative in the Imperial War Cabinet. Smuts came to London in 1917 and used his time there to draw political capital from his active promotion of the British war effort and the moral cause of the British Empire. Across England, he was hosted as an honoured speaker, and many of his speeches were given full and very positive press coverage. He used the attention to promote two parallel causes: reforming the Empire into a more cooperative organisation named the Commonwealth and creating a

League of Nations that included the Dominions as fully independent members. The leading argument for both causes was the active participation of South Africa and the other Dominions in the War, which Smuts held up as a sign that the settler colonies were now independent communities, willing and able to take on international responsibilities. Given his concerns for European civilization, voiced in the first days of the War, the idea of a League of Nations was intended by Smuts not only to cement the position of the Dominions as essentially autonomous in international affairs but, equally, to help protect European civilization against its own worst excesses.

Zimmern worked largely behind the scenes during the War, in the Foreign Office, where he supported the idea of an Empire/Commonwealth based on free cooperation between the constituent parts (one part, as he saw it, of international cooperation in action). As his most significant work during the War years was for the Foreign Office, drawing up the draft of the British proposal for the League of Nations, his views towards both Empire/Commonwealth and the League of Nations will be discussed in the following chapter (which examines debates about the Empire as a model for the League of Nations). The second section of this chapter, on the re-naming of the Empire to Commonwealth, will stress the importance of Zimmern in the process both before and after the War.

Murray, meanwhile, focussed his efforts on promoting international cooperation. During 1917 he became acquainted with Smuts, swiftly laying the grounds for a friendship of mutual respect, and the two men became allies in working for the creation of a League of Nations, to the point that Smuts in 1922 chose Murray to represent South Africa in the general assembly of the League. Compared to Smuts and Zimmern, Murray was far less vocal as an 'imperialist', though he defended the

Empire through his support for the rightness of the British cause. He also believed that British culture was superior to other cultures which, as shown both below and in Chapters 5 and 6, reflected in his tendency to align British culture with the Hellenic culture that he admired so much.

4.1.2 The importance of English/Anglo-centric culture

In the *Unfinished Autobiography* of Gilbert Murray, Salvador de Madariaga, one of Murray's fellow representatives at the League of Nations, notes that Murray commented in one of his letters to Smuts about how he was struck by the number of "small dark Latin Nations" in the League.³⁵⁰ According to Madariaga, Murray saw the League with an English mind-set, but never realised how this represented a particular form of bias. Rather, Madariaga contends, Murray considered the English perspective as one of open, disinterested fairness, which represented the only way forward for international peace, unlike the bias of local interests that these "small, dark" representatives brought along. In other words, for Murray, Englishness (or Britishness) was actually an internationalist mind-set of its own. Whether Murray's perception was really quite so naïve or not, he certainly expressed strong opinions about Britain's role as a model to the world, and it was exactly the same assumption of disinterested fairness that many of the imperialist-internationalists considered a basic precondition for the British Commonwealth.

In one of his speeches from May 1917, Smuts declared that:

You talk of an Imperial mission. I think the British Empire has only one mission, and that is a mission for liberty and a mission for greater self-development. You represent

³⁵⁰ Letter from G. Murray to J. Smuts, 8 October 1921, excerpt printed Murray, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 185.

the only system in history in which a large number of nations has been living in unity.

You talk about a league of nations. You are the only league of nations that has ever existed. If the lines I am sketching here are correct, you are going to be even more a great league of nations in the future; and if you are true to your old traditions of self-government and freedom and are true to those views of your future, you must exercise far greater and a far more beneficial influence on the history of mankind than you have ever done before.³⁵¹

Notice how Smuts highlights the achievements of the Empire as a unique achievement of international collaboration. Simultaneously, by calling the system and achievement “yours” rather than “ours”, Smuts marks it out as a specifically British achievement, which echoed his earlier acknowledgement that the Empire had done something unique by giving South Africa full and free rights within a decade of the Boer War.³⁵²

While the Smuts' formulations may have been deliberately pandering to British prejudice as a way to further his intended cause, there is little doubt that it was widely accepted as a valid view both in Britain and in the Dominions.

Looking into Hall's *British Commonwealth of Nations* of 1920, and keeping in mind that he was heavily influenced by Smuts, one can find regular indications that he too considered that there were certain 'British' attributes and experiences that helped make the Empire/Commonwealth particularly effective. One of the—otherwise rarely mentioned—features that Hall highlighted was the importance of voluntary associations (especially those that ranged across the Empire). According to Hall,

Conditions within this large and intimate group of peoples [the British Commonwealth] are particularly favourable to the germination and rapid growth of

³⁵¹ Smuts, speech 15 May 1917.

³⁵² As seen in his open answer to the resignation of General Beyers discussed previously in this chapter.

new political, social, and cultural ideas or movements. The general tendency is for these ideas or movements, having arisen in some one unit of the Group, to spread throughout the whole Group, as the immediate and most fertile expansion area, and the to spread in widening circles, first perhaps to the United States –the other great section of the English-speaking race- and onwards into foreign countries.³⁵³

As the quotation shows, Hall considered that the Empire/Commonwealth was particularly well-placed to develop new ideas, believing that “the English-speaking race”, whether in the Empire or the United States, provided a fruitful setting for new ideas to germinate before being passed on to the rest of the world.³⁵⁴ He considered this aspect so important that his only appendix to the complete book, apart from a select bibliography, was a listing of “Inter-Imperial Voluntary Associations” that he thought were of particular importance.³⁵⁵ However, Hall also thought that the catalysts for new political ideas no longer came from Britain itself, but rather from the younger and more dynamic Dominions, who in his view were at the centre of the development of the Empire/Commonwealth. Britain, the mother country, was at the periphery:

Generally speaking they [the people of the Dominions compared to the people in Britain] show a far keener sense of the historical tradition of the British Commonwealth—that is, of the road whereby it has reached its present position—than is shown by British people. This is due to the fact that the problem of government in the British Commonwealth was created by, and is conditioned by, the national development of the Dominions. The people of the United Kingdom have been on the whole passive spectators of the growth of Responsible Government. [...]. Thus, in a

³⁵³ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 368-369.

³⁵⁴ This is particularly developed in Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 370-371 in the section ‘The Grouping of the English-Speaking Peoples’, which is, in fact, the last two pages of the book.

³⁵⁵ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, ‘Appendix I’, pp. 372-378.

sense, the people of the Dominions are in a better position to understand the Imperial problem and to see the conditions of its solution than are the people of England.³⁵⁶

While Smuts and Hall had focussed on the exceptional character of the British political system, Zimmern's approach was more complicated. In an article 'Britain after the War', first published in 1923, he argued that the British Empire was "broadly speaking, the creation and expression of Englishmen, of the characteristic English genius", but conceded that it was no longer suitable for the present world.³⁵⁷

However, he considered it possible for it to undergo a "transformation of what has hitherto been an English Empire into a true multi-national Commonwealth—perhaps even into the nucleus of a World-Commonwealth",³⁵⁸ thus repeating his main lines of thought from the 1915 *War and Democracy*. By 1925, however, he made a point out of stressing that the Britishness of the British Empire or Commonwealth had no nationality as such tied to it and that this was the result of a gradual development over more than a century. The following quote from *The Third British Empire* is long, but it clearly shows the individual steps:

The first decisive step dissociating Britain from European methods of cultural imperialism was taken in 1774 in the Quebec Act. That Act committed us once and for all in our overseas Empire against the policy of an English Empire. It committed us to tolerance of Non-English and even non-British institutions, as the word British was understood at that time. The British Empire, as a result of the Quebec Act, was set on a course under which it could neither become an expansion of England nor of Greater Britain. You can see what I mean if you think for a moment of the gradual expansion

³⁵⁶ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 5-6.

³⁵⁷ Zimmern, 'England after the War' in *Prospects of Democracy* (1929), p. 18.

³⁵⁸ Zimmern, 'England after the War', p. 19.

of the meaning of the term 'British'. It started on its career as an adjective of nationality. That is what it was the time of Shakespeare. To-day it has no national significance whatever. If you are told to-day that a man is British or a Britisher, it does not convey anything at all as to his language or colour. 'British' has become nationally colourless, in order to become politically significant. It has passed through a number of intermediate stages. First, 'British' applied to England and Scotland, which were called Great Britain. Then it included Ireland; when Dilke wrote his book *Greater Britain*, referring to the overseas Empire, the title shows that he was thinking of the two islands as a unit—something than which the overseas Britain was greater. Next you have the term applied to the overseas Britain, that is to say, to the English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, who had gone to Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and so on. Then gradually it was extended to include the overseas whites, and in that sense it is still often used to-day—the peoples under the British flag who have a white skin. Finally it has reached its true sense, when it is simply an adjective to denote a subject of King George.³⁵⁹

As the quotation makes clear, by 1925 Zimmern saw the non-national character of British culture as the culmination of an organic, progressive development that allowed a more and more inclusive understanding of "Britishness" to grow over time. For Zimmern this was not simply an interesting quirk of history, but in fact an essential prerequisite of the success of the Empire/Commonwealth, and he took very strong exception to the idea that the organisation should remain Anglo-centric:

There is still lingering in the minds of many the idea that, though we do not have an English Empire, we ought to have an Anglo-centric Empire. On this theory, while we tolerate Non-English nations and cultures, we should persuade the subjects of King George who are not English by nationality to regard England as their centre and as the

³⁵⁹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 137.

model and exemplar of true culture. Thus one sometimes reads panegyrics on English education or government which assume that what we call 'English character' is just character *par excellence*. [...]

It cannot be said too strongly that all such doctrines are simply a pale reproduction of the German doctrine of Kultur which we so reprobated during the war. [...] It would be a very evil day for the British Empire if we took it over, and took it over, as we necessarily should, on a very much larger scale. [...]

As an Oxford man, I should like to express my strong dissent from the idea that my university should be used to promote cultural imperialism, to impose or dictate or in any way inculcate English national standards as universal standards.³⁶⁰

What Zimmern so strongly defended was the idea that transcending a national interpretation of Britishness was what gave the British Empire the chance to become an international organisation of a new kind. His reproach against the assumption that 'British character' was "just *par excellence*" can easily be seen as a reproach against exactly the attitude that de Madariaga claimed Murray exhibited in his attitude at the League (and which, indeed, Murray's own letter to Smuts discussed earlier suggests that he did have – at least up to a point).

Interestingly, in the same speech in which Smuts had hailed the special genius of the British model, he also supported the notion that its genius was to be naturally internationalist:

All the empires we have known in the past and that exist to-day are founded on the idea of assimilation, of trying to force human material into one mould. Your whole idea and basis is entirely different. (Cheers.) You do not want to standardize the

³⁶⁰ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 138-139.

nations of the British Empire; you want to develop them towards a greater nationality.

[...]

That is the fundamental fact that we have to bear in mind –that this British Commonwealth of nations does not stand for standardization or conventionalization, but for the fuller, richer, and more various life of all the nations comprised in it.³⁶¹

Curiously, Smuts and Zimmern thus appeared to be making very similar claims, namely that Britishness correctly understood was essentially internationalist in character. In Smuts' speech, this British ingrained internationalism had helped to shape the character of the Empire, just as Zimmern saw it as a reason to use the Empire/Commonwealth as a model for the League of Nations (see chapter 5). But the whole idea of tolerance and dedication to liberty and self-governance as something quintessentially British can still be seen to be exactly the sort of attitude that underlay the idea of the British being uniquely fair-minded and disinterested (and thus the natural leaders of international society). The imperialist-internationalists have indeed been so named not simply because they saw empires as precursors to internationalism, but also because they maintained a sense of superiority in their own kind of internationalism. As such, for all Zimmern's lofty intentions of not singling out Englishness or an Anglo-centric model as the ideal, and for all his heartfelt writings about the importance of cultural give and take at the universities between people of different nationalities, it is difficult to avoid concluding that he was promoting British ideals and a specifically the British liberal view of internationalism.

Zimmern did, however, stand far apart from Smuts in regards to people of colour.

Smuts was most concerned about the preservation of European civilization. Zimmern,

³⁶¹ Smuts, speech 15 May 1917.

as will be seen in the next section, was dedicated to the idea of the political equality of the races, even if he acknowledged that full self-governance was still a project requiring much development in some of the colonies.

4.2 Renaming the Empire

4.2.1 New Names

The British Empire was from the 1926 Balfour Declaration increasingly referred to as the “British Commonwealth of Nations” (a name that was formalised in 1931), although the term ‘Empire’ continued to be widely used for many years to come. The imperialist-internationalists had for many years been preoccupied about what to call the new organisation which they believed had emerged from the old British Empire. This section analyses the range of names suggested for the new empire, and the meanings associated with them, in order to illustrate what the imperialist-internationalists believed the new organisation actually was.

Two works—Halls’ *Commonwealth of Nations* (1920) and Zimmern’s *Third British Commonwealth* (1926)—help give a sense of the scope of new terms used for the Empire. Between them, Hall and Zimmern spoke of “the Empire”, “the Commonwealth”, “the Group”, “the Society”, and “the Entente”. While Empire was obviously the old name that they tried to phase out, “Commonwealth”, “Group”, “Society” and “Entente” were all explained with slightly different meanings. In the analysis that follows, proper names have been identified where nouns have been capitalised and given the definite form like “the British Group” or “the Group”, while use of the indefinite form, “a Group of States”, has been registered as a description rather than a name.

--Hall--

The following tables only list the names Hall used himself (that is disregarding the names used in any quotes given in his book). The names were divided into three main categories and one secondary category as shown in the table below:³⁶²

Table 1.1 Names in <i>The British Commonwealth of Nations</i>	Times used in book
"the British Empire", "the Empire"	338
"The British Commonwealth of Nations", "the British Commonwealth", "the Commonwealth" (referring to the British Commonwealth, not to the Australian)	107
"the British Group of States", "the British Group", "the Group"	111
"this Society of States", "this Society of Peoples", "the British Society of Nations"	3

As table 1.1 shows, Hall mostly used the names "the Empire" and "the British Empire" in spite of his book being entitled *The British Commonwealth of Nations*. He also used names based on the word "Group" slightly more than the ones based on the word "Commonwealth", while names based on "Society" appears only three times in the entire book (and may be considered only marginally relevant). Given Hall's strong interest in the League of Nations, there is little doubt that "the British Society of Nations" is inspired by the French name for the League, "*Société des Nations*".

The following table, 1.2, shows the distribution of the use of the three main types of names across the book according to chapter. The table tells an interesting story. At first glance, it is seen that the name "the British Group" is used in two chapter titles,

³⁶² For full breakdown, including number of uses of each individual nomination per chapter, see Appendix A, table of Names of Empire in H.D. Hall.

while “Commonwealth” is used in the title of the book, but not in the title of any chapter. Meanwhile, “Empire” as a concept, but not necessarily as a name, appears in the title of one chapter. This shows the fluidity of use of the different names.

1.2 Names per chapter in <i>The British Commonwealth of Nations</i>	“Empire”	“Common-wealth”	“Group”
Preface	7	10	2
1: ‘Introductory’	15	20	6
2: ‘The old Colonial System and the Coming of Responsible Government’	8	0	2
3: ‘The Meaning of Responsible Government –Ideas as the to the Nature of the Colonial Relationship, 1840-1900’	23	0	1
4: ‘The Rise of Colonial Nationalism and of the Colonial Idea of Alliance’	10	0	0
5: ‘The Imperial Conference, 1887-1911, and the Development of Dominion Nationhood’	21	1	0
6: ‘The Working of the British Group Before the War’	32	6	11
7: ‘The Development of Imperial Co-operation During and After the War’	26	6	7
8: ‘The Principles of the Settlement: Freedom and Co-operation –the Rejection of Imperial Federation’	31	9	8
9: ‘The Problem of Dominion Status –the Reconciliation of Absolute Equality of Nationhood with the Formal Duty of Empire ’	63	13	25
10: ‘The Machinery of Co-operation’	47	22	21
11: ‘ The British Group and the League of Nations’	55	30	28

Furthermore, a distinct pattern in usage can be determined. In the preface and introduction there is a distinct dominance of the names based on the words “Commonwealth” and “Group”, but they are barely used in the next four chapters,

although the term "Empire" is used freely. In chapters 6-9 "Empire" remains dominant, but there is an increasing use of the names based on "Commonwealth" and "Group", and in chapter 10 the division is half and half between the old names and the new ones. In the final chapter the new names again achieve a slight dominance over the term "Empire".

An explanation for this distribution of the usage of the different names is found in the chapter titles. Chapters 2-5 are essentially historical chapters, covering the period from 1840-1911, a period when the British Empire clearly was an empire and therefore referred to by that name. Hall is thus using the name "Empire" consistently both with its usage in the period he is covering and the dominant political understanding of what that term implies. From chapters 6 onwards, however, Hall was discussing the processes that had taken place in the previous decade, along with those that were still needed to fully transform the Empire into its new state, which he referred to by the name of "the Commonwealth". Similarly, the preface and introduction explains his views on the new situation and what is demanded of it, and thus primarily rely on the new terms. In fact, the introduction specifically introduces the name of "the Commonwealth" as the new proper term for the transcended Empire:

This [Colonial 1887] Conference had been partially an expression of the colonial conception of the relation between the Dominions and the United Kingdom as that of an "alliance" between autonomous states; but as the Imperial Conference developed, it became apparent that the word "alliance" very imperfectly expressed the real nature of this relationship. Being a word which is normally used to describe a limited and temporary contractual relationship between states, it gives a thoroughly misleading conception of the

natural and organic relationship which exists between the group of kindred states now becoming known as the British Commonwealth.³⁶³

The distribution shown in table 1.2 thus reflects a perspective where the author understands “Empire” as a historically correct and commonly understood name, while he is introducing the names “Commonwealth” and “Group” as modern replacements. The underlining highlights how Hall formulated and created his own reality, by stating that the Empire was “now becoming known as the British Commonwealth” as an established fact, in spite of the name having no official recognition in any statute yet, nor to any significant degree in political debate in either of the Houses of Parliament. It is also noticeable, that he used the distinctly Hegelian language of referring to the “natural and organic relationship” between the different parts.

--Hall: *Sample Analysis*—

Analysing a two page sample of Hall's *British Commonwealth of Nations* –found in the appendix - from the beginning of chapter eight, ‘The Principles of the Settlement: Freedom and Co-operation –the Rejection of Imperial Federation’, helps give a better understanding of the different names he presented as he used a wide selection of his new terms for the Empire in it.³⁶⁴ In the sample, he uses ‘the British Commonwealth of Nations’, ‘the Empire’ or “British Empire”, and ‘the Group’ or ‘the British Group’ in relation to the entity broadly known as the Empire. The Dominions are specifically mentioned as being part of “the Group”.

The sample uses the name ‘the British Commonwealth of Nations’ once, ‘the Empire’ or ‘the British Empire’ on three occasions (on one of which British Empire is

³⁶³ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 11-12. My underlining.

³⁶⁴ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 198-99. The sample can be found in Appendix B.

given the predicate 'a Group of States'), and 'the Group' or 'the British Group' three times. The joint occurrence of the names 'the Empire' and 'the Group', along with the fact that the Empire is described as '*a Group of States*' in line 30, suggests that Hall uses the two names to refer to the same entity, but with the specification that 'Group' implies that the Empire is as a 'Group of States' of which a basic principle is "the equal and autonomous nationhood of each self-governing State of the Group" (lines 13-14). Referring to the Empire as 'the Group' is thus intended to imply a specific political meaning, namely that of the free collaboration of autonomous group-members. This makes the sample ambiguous, because it both suggests that "the Group" and "the Empire" refer to the same thing, namely the complete Empire including the non-self-governing parts, and, in the very next words, predicate the member states of "the Group" as "absolutely free and equal" (line 30), which could – at that point in time – logically only refer to Britain and the Dominions.

While the sample only once uses the name 'the British Commonwealth of Nations', it is also the title of the entire book, which gives it more salience than the sample might suggest. In this particular case, the name is used in connection with "*the new ideas as to the nature and purpose of the British Commonwealth of Nations*" (lines 4-5), which semantically presupposes the existence of something named 'the British Commonwealth of Nations' while suggesting that it is related to new ideas and the future. Thus it appears that 'the British Commonwealth of Nations' is given as the new name of the entity commonly known as 'the British Empire', which could correctly be referred to as 'the British Group of Nations' considered as a group of independent states. Thus all three (or five counting the short-forms) names refer to the same entity, but implies slightly different meanings with 'Empire' being the historical

name, 'Group' an explanatory name probably limited to Great Britain and the Dominions, and 'Commonwealth' the new name for the future.

-Zimmern-

Given that Zimmern's *Third British Empire* was published in 1926, six years after Hall's *British Commonwealth*, it is noticeable that he used the term "Empire" rather than "Commonwealth" in the title of the book. The same use is consistent in the titles of the five chapters that each correspond to a lecture given at Columbia University in 1925.

Table 2.1 presents a simple break-down of the main names for the Empire used:

2.1 Names in Zimmern, <i>Third British Empire</i> (1926)	Times used in book
"Empire", "British Empire"	137
"British Commonwealth of Nations", "Commonwealth of Nations", "British Commonwealth", "Commonwealth" ³⁶⁵	48
"British Entente", "Entente"	11

This shows the absolute dominance of the use of "Empire" or "British Empire" when naming the empire, with the names based on "Commonwealth" a distant second. The third type of name was based on the word "Entente", used as "British Entente" or simply as "the Entente". In chapter II of 'The British Empire and the League of Nations', Zimmern explained why he used the term entente:

³⁶⁵ The book contains also uses "Imperial Commonwealth", but it is only used once in reference to a quote from the 1917 Imperial Conference that Zimmern feels the need to explain, and he never adopts the use of the term himself, wherefore it has not been counted.

Let us face the fact that, viewed coldly, the resultant political entity [coming from the concessions Britain had granted the Dominions after WWI] is something looser than a sovereign state, something looser than a confederacy of even an alliance, because no written bond exists between the Dominions and Great Britain or between the Dominions themselves. It is, in fact, most accurately described by the word Entente. The British Empire of 1914 has become a British Entente, a group of states, each independent and with full control over its policy, but bound together by cordial feelings and by arrangements for mutual consultation and more or less regular intervals.³⁶⁶

Purporting to take the view of a neutral rational observer, Zimmern listed various types of relations that he believed did not reflect the actual relations between Britain and the Dominions. He then proceeded to state as an uncontested fact that the relations were “accurately described by the word Entente”, and in the following pages the definite article was consistently used, making it “the British Entente”³⁶⁷ (ie a proper name). But if the relationship between Britain and the Dominions was one of entente, the quotation below shows that Zimmern also tried to assess whether or not the Dominions were included in the term “the British Empire” in regards to the League on Nations:

The British Members of the League consists of ‘The British Empire’, the five self-governing Dominions, and India. Does ‘The British Empire’ include the whole Empire or only that part of it (Great Britain and the non-self-governing Dominions) not separately represented? The British Cabinet seems committed to the former view, but there are strong considerations leading to the other conclusion. It must not be forgotten that the Dominions received a written assurance in 1919 from the President of the Paris

³⁶⁶ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 42.

³⁶⁷ A. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 43-44, pp. 60-62.

Conference which drew up the Covenant of the League that they should be eligible for election as non-permanent members of the Council, in spite of the permanent seat assigned in that body to 'the British Empire'. It seems difficult to maintain that M. Clemenceau and his colleagues admitted the right of the Dominions to be double represented on the Council.³⁶⁸

Zimmern's conclusion thus appears to be that, at least in so far as the League was concerned, the Dominions though part of the British Group should not be counted as part of the British Empire. The international complications of their unknown status are further explored in Chapter 6.

Interestingly, Zimmern explained the "British Entente" as "a group of states", just as Hall did with "the Empire", suggesting that they may have had essentially the same concept in mind with their two different names (though Zimmern never referred to Hall or any of his work). The similarity is strengthened by Zimmern's mention of the 'independence' and 'consultation' of the members of the entente, in a manner similar to Hall's talk of 'autonomy' and 'consultation' between members of "the Group" – though Zimmern mitigated the scope of consultation by suggesting that it should be 'more or less regular', whereas Hall consistently called for it to be 'continuous' (Hall, lines 14 and 31). The main difference between Zimmern's use of "British Entente" and Hall's use of "British Group" lies in the frequency with which the name was used. While Tables 1.1 and 1.2 showed that Hall used the name "Group" regularly throughout his book, Table 2.2 below shows that Zimmern only used the name "Entente" in chapter II. This strongly suggests that Zimmern mainly saw the Entente

³⁶⁸ Zimmern, *Third British Empire*, p. 31.

as most relevant in a League of Nations context, while Hall viewed it in a wider scope, relating both to intra-imperial and international relations.

Table 2.2 Names per chapter in <i>Third British Empire</i>	“Empire”	“Common -wealth”	“Entente”
I. ‘The Third British Empire’	58	12	0
II. ‘The British Empire and the League of Nations’	14	10	11
III. ‘The Empire and the Non-White Peoples’	33	10	0
IV. ‘The Empire and International Economic Co- operation’	12	5	0
V. ‘The Empire and Nationality’ ³⁶⁹	20	11	0

--Zimmern and the use of “Commonwealth”--

Given a context in which the former Empire had in effect split up into two entities—that is the dominions and the colonies—Zimmern needed to find some way to bring the parts back together as one whole. In the beginning of Chapter 1, Zimmern stated as a fact that “The British Empire of 1914 has now become the British Commonwealth of Nations”, noting that the name had first appeared in 1914, without mentioning that he himself had been the one to publish the name.³⁷⁰ However, as already shown, he defined a Commonwealth of Nations as a multi-cultural and multi-national state. That does not however in itself explain how the Commonwealth differed from the old Empire except in name, and since the name had not yet been formally changed Zimmern, had to explain what the term implied was needed. The explanation was left until the third lecture, on the Empire and its relation to race

³⁶⁹ Chapter V. uses the term “English Empire” 5 times, but every time in the context of what the Empire is not. It is therefore not counted as an actual nomination of the Empire, but as a nomination shown and rejected as an argumentation technique.

³⁷⁰ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 43-44, p. 3.

issues. The following two quotations form part of a long discussion of the political relations between the white and non-white people of the Empire.

The duty of facing the race problem is one that is especially incumbent on British citizens. For the British Empire, on a majority vote, is not a white empire but a coloured empire. Hitherto, the whites have borne rule; but if the Third Empire is to be a Commonwealth of Nations, based on the idea of equal partnership, we must discover how to transform the relationship of prestige to which I have already referred into a more equal co-operation for common ends.³⁷¹

Is the British Empire to be run on the basis of white supremacy? Does it represent a permanent supremacy of the white over the non-white races, based on the conception of the innate superiority of the white man and on the policy of 'keeping the coloured man in his place'?

That is indeed a familiar and a very convenient theory, and one, it can be added, which makes a particular appeal to white men of inferior calibre who like to feel that, whatever their individual defects, they belong to a superior type. But it is a theory for which there is no warrant either in science, or in religion, or in morals, or in any decent code of manners.³⁷²

Zimmern here put his finger straight on the sore spot, the simple fact that white people were a minority in the Empire, and so would be a political minority in a democratically run Empire. While this fact was one of the reasons why the idea of imperial federation had been rejected by some, Zimmern made it clear that in his view, there was no validity whatsoever in claiming permanent white superiority, and that consequently the focus should be on transforming the previous imperial relations "into a more equal co-operation". He explained that the "Commonwealth of Nations"

³⁷¹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 82.

³⁷² Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 84.

was “based on the idea of equal partnership” which was much the same as what he claimed for the “British Entente”, which suggests that the Commonwealth should have similar aims to the Entente, as regards the mutual relations of the different members or partners. All in all, it appears that the “British Commonwealth” was intended to refer to an essentially democratic and inclusive government model, where the clear aim was equal political rights for peoples irrespective of skin colour. This view is supported by the entire chapter and several other parts of the lecture series.³⁷³

Zimmern therefore showed that “Empire” could either be understood as the complete Empire or as Britain and its dependencies. He offered up “Entente” as the term to describe the relations between Britain and the Dominions and India, while suggesting the term “Commonwealth” both as the new name for the complete Empire, and as a signal that it both could and should become an egalitarian partnership of nations of all races.

4.2.2 Why “Commonwealth”?

The previous section has shown why the term “Empire” was increasingly problematic, and examined how imperialist-internationalists like Zimmern and Hall sought to present new names to capture the character of the organisation they believed it was becoming, the question remains as to why they favoured terms like the British Commonwealth of Nations rather than (for example) the British Society of Nations.

In the context of the recent Empire, the term “Commonwealth” had been used to describe the federation of Australia, but not in the case of South Africa or Canada, and so there was no clear imperial precedent. Among the former British colonies in

³⁷³ For examples read the entire chapter III, or chapter V on the Empire and Nationality, where it is stressed that not only is white-ness not a cause for superiority, neither is English culture, pp. 134-139.

the United States, a number such as the Commonwealth of Virginia had taken the name "Commonwealth" at the time of independence, but only as individual states in the greater American federation, which was of course the United States of America and not "the Commonwealth of America". In the context of Great Britain, the only historical Commonwealth was Cromwell's republican Commonwealth of the 1650s, which does not seem the most obvious precedent when considering the successor of the British Empire. In short, none of the most recent political uses of "Commonwealth" in a British connection seem to have been of obvious relevance to debates about the changing character of the British Empire (nor, indeed, to be particularly closely aligned to Zimmern's definition of a Commonwealth of Nations).

However, looking at the *Oxford English Dictionary* one finds that two of the main definitions of "commonwealth" are:

2. The whole body of people constituting a nation or state, the body politic; a state, an independent community, esp. viewed as a body in which the whole people have a voice or an interest.
3. **a.** A state in which the supreme power is vested in the people; a republic or democratic state.³⁷⁴

As can be seen, definitions 2 and 3a both highlight the common interest of the whole people in a commonwealth, with definition 3a specifically designating it republic or democracy, which is in line with the views Hall and Zimmern advanced when setting down their concept of the new Commonwealth of Nations (i.e. as an institution in which the democratic polity should include all the participant parts).

³⁷⁴ "commonwealth, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2014).

In British political philosophy, both Hobbes and Locke had used the term 'commonwealth' in *Leviathan* and *Two Treatises of Government* respectively, in both cases specifically connecting it to the Latin term *civitas*, a meaning similar to the OED's definition 2 of commonwealth (and distinct from its use to describe Cromwell's government of the 1650s).³⁷⁵ A perusal of translations of ancient texts actually shows that "Commonwealth" has not generally been the standard translation of *civitas*, though it was certainly commonly used: a basic search of the word "commonwealth" in the Perseus Digital Library of ancient texts, hosted by Tufts University, shows its presence in 1262 document results from Aeschines to Pseudo-Plutarch.³⁷⁶ Given that the Perseus collection relies on out of copyright editions, the majority of the translations are from the mid 19th to mid 20th century, and thus created within a relevant timeframe for the purpose of this thesis.

In the translations of Greek texts, "Commonwealth" was usually given as the translation of phrases involving words like *koinos* ('common', in the *Middle Liddell Greek-English Dictionary*,³⁷⁷ the neuter *yo koinon* is suggested as a match to the Latin *res publica*), *holos* ('whole' or 'entire', used in connection with cities) and *polis* or *politea* ('the people', or 'community of people' of a city).³⁷⁸ A different case of the

³⁷⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), chap. 17, Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), ii. x. §133.

³⁷⁶ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/searchresults?q=commonwealth> (23 March 2015).

³⁷⁷ The *Middle Liddell* was the dominant Greek-English Dictionary of the second half of the nineteenth century, the dictionary that both translators and the imperialist-internationalists would have been used to use as reference.

³⁷⁸ Use of "commonwealth" for phrases involving *koinos*, 'common' appears among other places in: Demosthenes, *Demosthenes*, translated by J. H. Vince (Harvard University Press, 1930), 10 45; Aristotle, *Aristotle*, Vol. 22, translated by J. H. Freese. (Harvard University Press, 1926), Rh. 1.5; Aristotle, *Aristotle*, Vol. 21, translated by H. Rackham (Harvard University Press, 1944), Pol. 3.1278b; and Plato, *Plato*, Vol. 1 translated by H.N. Fowler (Harvard University Press, 1966), Crito 50a.

Use of "Commonwealth" for phrases involving *holos* in: Aristotle, *Aristotle*, Vol. 18, translated by G.C. Armstrong (Harvard University Press, 1935), Oacon. 2.1346a; and Demosthenes, *Demosthenes*, translated by J. H. Vince (Harvard University Press, 1926), 19 1.

Using "Commonwealth" for *polis*, *politea* and similar designations is common across the translations of Aristotle, Plato, Demosthenes etc. but a particularly poignant case is in Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian War*, translated T. Hobbes of Malmesbury. (Bohn, 1843), 6.15, where Hobbes translates

use of “commonwealth” in classical studies is Zimmern’s previously discussed *The Greek Commonwealth* of 1911. In translations of Latin texts, “commonwealth” regularly occur as the translation of *res publica* in standard texts by authors such as Caesar, Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Tacitus and Suetonius. In the case of Cicero, “commonwealth” has also been used to translate *communi*.³⁷⁹

What can be seen in both the OED and in the translations, particularly those from Latin, is that “commonwealth” has regularly been used as an English synonym for *res publica* or republic. When looking at the 1917 translation of Rousseau’s tract on perpetual peace, used in chapter two,³⁸⁰ it is interesting to notice that Vaughan translates Rousseau’s *République Européenne* as “the Commonwealth of Europe”, rather than the more straightforward ‘European Republic’.³⁸¹ Given the context of World War I, with its challenges to empires and monarchies across Europe, it is probable that the word “commonwealth” was chosen in Vaughan’s translations to avoid any implications of “republic” in the sense of a “non-monarchical” form of government. In a similar way, the wide use of the term “commonwealth” in translations of a variety of ancient texts suggests that it held a position as a neutral

Ἀθηναίων πόλιν (*Athenaion polis*) into “Athenian Commonwealth” (though Benjamin Jovett in Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, translated B. Jowett (Clarendon Press, 1881), translates the same part into Athenian State).

³⁷⁹ “Commonwealth” used for *res publica* in: C. J. Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, translated W. A. McDevitte. & W. S. Bohn. (Harper & Brothers, 1869); M.T. Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, translated C. D. Yonge (Bohn, 1856), Catil. 1.5; M.T. Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, translated C. D. Yonge (George Bell & Sons, 1891), Planc. 37; Livy, *History of Rome*, translated by W.M. Roberts (E. P. Dutton and Co, 1912), 1, 2; Tacitus, *Complete Works of Tacitus*, translated A. J. Church (Random House, 1873. reprinted 1942), Hist. 1.5; Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*, translated J. Selby Watson (Harper & Brothers, 1899), Cat. 3; and Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, ed. J.E. Reed. (Gebbie & Co., 1889), Augustus. 27.

“commonwealth” was used for *commune* in M.T. Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, translated C. D. Yonge (George Bell & Sons, 1903), Ver. 2.2.114; and Cicero, *The Orations* (1856), Man. 19.

³⁸⁰ Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”.

³⁸¹ Compare Rousseau, ‘Projet De Paix Perpetuelle’ with Rousseau, “Abstract’ and ‘Judgment’”, p. 108.

word for state or community that could cover a range of political constellations with democratic elements—notably including that of a republic. In a broader context, the word “commonwealth” can be found in use in late nineteenth-century British political tracts, whether dealing with Britain or the United States. The 1886 work, *Oceana, or England and her Colonies*, by James A. Froude, which promoted the federation of the English ‘race’, called for “a ‘commonwealth’ of Oceana held together by common blood, common interest, and a common pride in the great position which unity can secure.”³⁸² Froude later defined a “commonwealth” as “The commonwealth is the *common health*, the common wellness”,³⁸³ an admittedly rather weak and open-ended definition, which he made clear was not automatically consistent with democracy – in fact rather the contrary, given that he cited Aristotle as his authority,³⁸⁴ though he also conceded that democracy was needed to maintain the unity of the Empire.³⁸⁵ While Froude’s work was unclear about whether democracy belonged to the concept of “commonwealth”, Goldwin Smith, in his 1902 work *Commonwealth or Empire*³⁸⁶—a book about the United States rather than the British Empire—clearly equated “commonwealth” with “democracy” and “republic”.³⁸⁷ He identified “Empire” with “a career of conquest and domination over subject races, with the political liabilities that such a career entails”.³⁸⁸ Smith’s work expressed a fear that the United States might regress from being a commonwealth into becoming an empire (the process referred to in its title *Commonwealth or Empire*). There was in his ideas a certain

³⁸² J.A. Froude, *Oceana* (Spottswode and Co, 1886), p. 12.

³⁸³ Froude, *Oceana*, p. 154.

³⁸⁴ Froude, *Oceana*, p. 154.

³⁸⁵ Froude, *Oceana* (1886), p. 392.

³⁸⁶ G. Smith, *Commonwealth or Empire* (Macmillan, 1902).

³⁸⁷ Smith, *Commonwealth or Empire*, pp. 2-3.

³⁸⁸ Smith, *Commonwealth or Empire*, p. 2.

similarity to the ideas subsequently expressed by the imperialist-internationalists who of course wanted the Empire to progress into a Commonwealth.

Finally, looking at the use of the word "commonwealth" in newspaper articles from *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* from 1890-1915, and ignoring the cases where it referred to the planned or newly created Commonwealth of Australia, it can again be seen to have a broad and generally positive meaning. For example, two articles from 1890 and 1893 in *The Times* use the word "commonwealth" or "American Commonwealth" to refer to the United States of America when discussing "the most important book upon the American Commonwealth" by James Bryce (*The American Commonwealth*, 1888).³⁸⁹ Other articles from 1890, 1891, and 1894 use "commonwealth" as a reference for the unity of England, Scotland, and Ireland, or the UK as such,³⁹⁰ while another 1890 article uses "commonwealth" to refer to England alone.³⁹¹

By 1915 the term "commonwealth" was still used on occasion as an alternative designation of the United States, including in an article in *The Times* about the common ideals shared by Britain and the US: "thanks to the liberality of their [the USA] institutions, they are able to absorb all elements as loyal members of their commonwealth."³⁹² The term was also used on occasion to refer to "civilised" non-German Europe. A 1915 advertisement for the Anti-German League stated that "there must be no readmission for them [Germany] to the free commonwealth of Europe".³⁹³

³⁸⁹ "Royal Academy Banquet." *The Times*, 5 May 1890, p. 10 and T. Case. "The Home Rule Bill And British Federation." *The Times*, 27 Feb. 1893, p. 8.

³⁹⁰ "School For Modern Oriental Studies." *The Times*, 13 Jan. 1890, p. 8; "FREE LAND LEAGUE.- The annual meeting of." *The Times*, 26 Feb. 1891, p. 7; and "Mr. Chamberlain In Edinburgh." *The Times*, 23 Mar. 1894, p. 5.

³⁹¹ "Owens College, Manchester." *The Times*, 4 Oct. 1890, p. 4.

³⁹² "An Ideal in Common." *The Times*, 23 Feb. 1915, p. 9.

³⁹³ "Britannia's New Shield." *The Times*, 10 Sept. 1915, p. 4.

In this context, it is interesting to see the connotation of “free” linked to the broader open entity or a European commonwealth.

Though Zimmern made first use of the complete name “the British Commonwealth of Nations”, McIntyre’s *Britannic Vision* cites some earlier references to the Empire as a commonwealth by Lord Rosebery in 1884 and John Merriman in 1887. McIntyre further argues that by the early twentieth century, “commonwealth” was used both for a single state and for a group of states.³⁹⁴ From that point onwards, “British Commonwealth” and general references to the Empire as Commonwealth became increasingly common, as seen, for example, in the *Manchester Guardian*, which in June 1915 quoted a Christian missionary, Dr. Adney, as saying in a speech that “The title “British Empire” was a misleading misnomer. It would be more true to speak of a “British Commonwealth”, all divisions of which were loyal to the British throne and community of British political life, while each of them was self-governing.”³⁹⁵ It is striking how similar the sentiment and even wording used here was to the later Balfour Declaration on Dominion Autonomy of 1926.

Likewise, in November 1915, Phillip Kerr of the Round Table spoke about “the self-governing nations of the British Commonwealth” in a talk given at King’s College and published in *The Times*.³⁹⁶ It is worth noting that “the British Commonwealth” is mentioned as an existing entity. The Round table Group fully adopted the name Commonwealth, and in 1916 Lionel Curtis, its leading member, published *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, which throughout refers to the British

³⁹⁴ McIntyre, *Britannic Vision*, pp. 82-85.

³⁹⁵ “LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE.” *The Manchester Guardian*, Jun 18 1915, p. 3.

³⁹⁶ “Future Of Empire.” *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1915, p. 5.

Commonwealth.³⁹⁷ By 1917, the name “the British Commonwealth of Nations” got its strongest support, when General Smuts declared:

The British Empire is much more than a State. I think the very expression “Empire” is misleading, because it makes people think that we are one community, to which the word “Empire” can appropriately be applied. Germany is an Empire. Rome was an Empire. India is an Empire. But we are a system of Nations. We are not a State, but rather a community of States and nations. We are far greater than any Empire which has ever existed, and by using this ancient expression we really disguise the main fact that our whole position is different, and that we are not one State or nation or empire, but a whole world by ourselves, consisting of many nations, of many States, and all sorts of communities, under one flag.

We are a system of States, and not, I think, a stationary system, but a system always going forward to new destinies. Take the position of that system to-day. Here you have the United Kingdom with a number of Crown Colonies. Besides that, you have large protectorates like Egypt, an Empire by itself. Then you have a great Dependency like India, also an Empire by itself, where civilization has existed from time immemorial. We are trying to see how East and West can work together. These are enormous problems; but beyond them we come to the so-called Dominions, almost independent in government themselves, which have been evolved on the principle of a European constitutional system into almost independent States, but who all belong to this community of nations, which I prefer to call “the British Commonwealth of Nations.

You can see that no political ideas which we have evolved in the past will apply to this world which is comprised in the British Empire; and any name we have yet found for

³⁹⁷ Curtis, *Problem of the Commonwealth*.

this group is insufficient. The man who will find a proper name for this system will, I think, do real service to the Empire.³⁹⁸

It is worth noting, that Smuts insisted that the Commonwealth was unlike any previous system, and that it was not an empire anymore, but rather an international community in its own right. The speech resulted in a more than exponential rise of the name “British Commonwealth”, which can be traced through a look at its appearance in the press, here represented by *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. The following table shows the number of articles containing the name by year.

Paper/year³⁹⁹	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920
<i>Manchester Guardian</i>	1	4	26	36	46	64
<i>The Times</i>	1	1	21	36	61	45

While the most dramatic increase came in the articles from 1917, where a majority referred to Smuts, as the table shows a more moderate but still significant increase of numbers of articles continued over the next three years.

4.2.3 Renaming the Empire: Conclusions

A change in the name of the Empire, or at least the part of the Empire consisting of the United Kingdom and its self-governing white colonies, was considered necessary by the imperialist-internationalists because the concept of Empire was increasingly beginning to be considered toxic in any discussion about future intra-imperial relations. Introducing the term ‘Dominions’ for the self-governing colonies had given

³⁹⁸ Smuts, speech 15 May 1917.

³⁹⁹ Results found by searching on “British Commonwealth” for the years 1915 to 1920 in the databases.

them a satisfactory kind of recognition, even when it had no independent legal definition, which set a clear precedent that a change of name could in and of itself help soften tensions in intra-imperial relations.

This analysis of new names used in Hall's *British Commonwealth of Nations* and Zimmern's *Third British Empire* showed how they presented "the British Commonwealth of Nations" as the *de facto* new name of the Empire, while using a range of terms for particular aspects of the imperial organisation. Meanwhile, an analysis of uses of the term "commonwealth" in translations of classical works and in British political philosophy, as well as newspaper articles from the late 19th to early 20th century, has shown how the term was normally used in a positive sense to describe quite a broad range of states structures, generally based on a principle of state legitimacy deriving from the people. When writers like Hall and Zimmern used the term "Commonwealth" they were therefore making use of a word with positive democratic overtones, which did not have strongly Cromwellian associations, nor any strong revolutionary or anti-monarchical connotations. They used the term to suggest a structure open to all the peoples of the Empire, without any central rule implied, making it palatable to both the Afrikaners of South Africa and the Francophonie of Canada, while the established English use of the word commonwealth both in political philosophy and in everyday language made it familiar to the British audience.

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the imperialist-internationalists, as represented by Smuts, Murray, Zimmern, and Hall, from the start of World War I recognised its potential to transform the British Empire and its place in the wider world. It has also examined

their views about how the process would take place and their attempts to develop ideas about how to shape it. Realising that one aspect of moulding the political system of the Empire was to change its name to something reflecting their view of what kind of system the Empire should be, they consciously began to promote the name 'the British Commonwealth of Nations' as the new, *de facto*, name of the British Empire (that is years before it received any statutory official recognition). By repeatedly using the new name, especially from 1917 onwards, they managed to make it an increasingly accepted part of the political debate as reflected by its growing use in the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. The analysis in the second section of this chapter indicates that the name 'Commonwealth' was chosen less because of any specific historical significance, and rather because it was a commonly used term for a broadly democratic type of political society, familiar both to students of political philosophy and the ancient world. Since the term did not have the anti-monarchical overtones of 'republic' it was favoured by the imperialist-internationalists who remained convinced that the common bond of the Imperial Crown was crucial to the British Commonwealth.

The chapter has also demonstrated the degree to which the imperialist-internationalists –Zimmern's rejection of white supremacy notwithstanding– considered the Commonwealth an essentially British project, made possible by specifically British cultural traits and a sense of 'Britishness' which they considered an inherently internationalist identity. According to the imperialist-internationalists, it was this that made the Commonwealth the only relevant model for creating the League of Nations, a position discussed and analysed in the following chapter.

5: The British Empire and the formation of the League of Nations

Just as World War I accelerated the development of the Empire into the Commonwealth of Nations, it also became a catalyst for new international cooperation, culminating in the creation of the League of Nations. And, just as the imperialist-internationalists had seen the potential of World War I for changing the world when it started in 1914, so they believed that with the coming of peace they had an opportunity and a duty to try to shape the League of Nations and the international order more generally. In correspondence between Murray and Smuts on 11 and 12 November 1918, at the time of the armistice, the responsibility of that chance weighed heavily upon them: "the future of the world depends on whether or no we possess wisdom and generosity"⁴⁰⁰ wrote Murray to Smuts on the 11th, who answered back the next day, stating "The immediate future is very fateful. The old immobile world is once more fluid, and the creator can once more mould it to better ends. But the danger of things going wrong is as great as ever."⁴⁰¹

It was this sense of enormous opportunity and risk that characterised the Paris Peace Conference which ran throughout 1919. Largely seen as an opportunity to reorganise the world for the twentieth century, there was a widespread perception that everything was 'up for grabs', an impression that was not altogether countered by the Big Three (the American President Woodrow Wilson, the French President Georges Clemenceau, and the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George). All the main recognised countries sent delegations, as did many of the embryonic states that had emerged in Europe during the early months of peace, along with organisations

⁴⁰⁰ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV*. Vol. 20, No. 93, Letter from G.G.A. Murray, 11 November 1918, p. 4.

⁴⁰¹ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV*. Vol. 20, No. 204, Letter to G.G.A. Murray, 12 November 1918, p. 5.

interested in issues on such questions as Women's Rights. The result was that the Conference hosted a multitude of delegations involved in numerous and negotiations, making it virtually impossible to analyse as a single whole. The sheer scale of the Paris Peace Conference means that the vast majority of academic works on the Conference choose to focus on specific aspects of it—including works analysing the negotiations, motivations, and practical consequences of creating the League—rather than offering a really comprehensive coverage.⁴⁰² This fractured approach means that there is not one dominant work on the nature and significance of the Peace Conference, nor the creation of the League of Nations itself, that must be evaluated for this thesis. Rather, the diverse scope means that there is still plenty of space for further specialised research.

A common approach to the dynamics between the big powers is to see the American delegation as idealistic, the British as focussed on restoring trade and securing imperial advantage, and the French as narrow-mindedly focussed on punishing Germany, either by breaking up the country or by crushing it under severe obligations and penalties that would prevent it from threatening France again. As is often the case with simplistic views, the idea of this triangle of power and competing perceptions is misleading, even if it does capture some of the dynamics involved. In regards to the creation of the League of Nations, many British politicians—both those involved in

⁴⁰² One of the most recent comprehensive coverages of the Paris Peace Conference is Macmillan, *Peacemakers* (2001), which however pays for its comprehensiveness by only dedicating 15 pages to the League of Nations, for example. Meanwhile, in Henig, *The League of Nations* (2010) the entire history of the League from idea to Covenant to end in 1945 is covered, giving only one chapter to the actual negotiations of the Covenant at the Paris Peace Conference. D. Fromkin, *The Peace to End All Peace* (Owl Books, 1989), is focussed on the settlement of the Middle East at the Peace Conference and its disastrous results for future stability in the region. More recent works also tend to be specialised, such as T.W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914–1938* (University of Hawaii Press, 2008), or E. Manela, "Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1919." *The American Historical Review* (2006), 111, no. 5, pp. 1327-1351.

the process and those on the side-lines—did indeed consider that Wilson's plan for such an organisation was idealistic, or utopian as E.H. Carr would later say, but also believed that the British proposals were solidly based on practical and indeed imperial experience. The dedication of the imperialist-internationalists to the League project was neatly expressed by Smuts in a letter written on 21 January 1919, where he declared that "The League of Nations, which *is the real business of this Conference*, is progressing very well" (italics added).⁴⁰³

A wealth of published materials from 1916 onwards—including pamphlets, articles and books—demonstrates how the imperialist-internationalists publicly used historical examples drawn from imperial experience as illustrations of precursors of internationalism. The material, discussed in more detail below, also shows how, in their estimate, the British experience of imperialism from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century could provide an ideological and practical foundation for internationalism as well as helping to promote the whole League idea in Britain. The following pages also examine a range of archival material, including letters and internal documents unpublished at the time, which tells a similar story. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the ideas of Leo Amery to show that even some politicians who were opposed to the League agreed that it had from the British side been based on the model of the Empire.

⁴⁰³ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV*. Vol. 98, No. 57, Letter to A. Clark, 21 Januar 1919, p. 51.

5.1 Internationalism as an extension of imperialism

“The true imperialist to-day is an internationalist” wrote Zimmern in a 1923 article published in the US.⁴⁰⁴

Chapter 2 of this thesis traced western ideas on Empires as peace-creators from antiquity to the nineteenth century, making the case that their role in keeping international peace and order was recognised down to the time of J.S. Mill, while Chapter 3 showed that most members of the group of imperialist-internationalists had a training in classics which led them to understanding Greece and Hellenism as exemplars of liberal ideas. It therefore remains here to show how the imperialist-internationalists were sufficiently influenced by their cultural and educational background to consider imperialism as a prototype internationalism to be part of their arguments for creating the League.

Robert Cecil, as a member of the Foreign Office, promoted the idea of a League of Nations to the War Cabinet from 1916, the year when he circulated a memorandum that vividly described the horrors of the war and its costs both socially and economically to Britain and the World. He included a proposal for a simple covenant. In the memorandum, dated October 1916, he stated that

It is not too much to say that it [WWI] has endangered the fabric of our civilisation and if it is to be repeated the whole European system may probably disappear in anarchy. It is surely, therefore, most urgent that we should try to think out some plan to lessen the probability of future war.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Zimmern, 'The Things of Martha and the Things of Mary', p. 100.

⁴⁰⁵ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51102, ff. 1-5, quote f. 2. The text, presumably identical, is printed as an appendix, dated Autumn 1916 in Cecil's account of the creation of the League; R. Cecil, *A Great Experiment* (Johnathan Cape Lmt, 1941), pp. 353-357, where the quote can be found on page 254.

His alarm closely mirrors Smuts' misgivings fears about the future of civilisation at the start of the War, discussed in Chapter 4, and shows how some in Britain believed that securing peace for the future was a matter of urgency. For the United States, however, the time was not yet right, as shown in a letter from Eric Drummond, a Foreign Office civil servant and later the first Secretary General of the League, to Arthur Balfour, dated 15 November 1916, who told him that "the President [Wilson] thought it better that the Government of the United States should not in any way be committed to a cut and dried plan for the establishment of a League of Nations," and that members of the Wilson administration "were discouraging in the United States discussions as to the League of Nations, etc."⁴⁰⁶ As Drummond had receive this insight from Wilson's confidant, Colonel House, further development on the whole issue was effectively shelved in Britain for the time being.

However, by early 1918 the time was considered right to continue with Cecil's proposal, and the Foreign Secretary, Balfour, appointed a "Committee on the League of Nations" led by Lord Phillimore, a noted specialist on international law, to "inquire, particularly from a juridical and historical point of view, into the various schemes for establishing by means of a League of Nations, or other device, some alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes".⁴⁰⁷ In Cecil's 1941 history of the League, *A Great Experiment*,⁴⁰⁸ he introduces his discussion of the Phillimore Report by listing a few highlights of international cooperation for peace, mentioning the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church, the Holy Roman Empire, and

It is interesting to notice, the similarity between Cecil's concerns for future European civilization with Smuts' concern for the same, expressed just at the outbreak of WWI (see chapter 4).

⁴⁰⁶ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51102, ff. 11-12, quotes f. 11 and f. 12.

⁴⁰⁷ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 180-181. Quote p. 181, is in Zimmern's text give in quotations marks, but there is no direct reference. It is, I think, to be assumed that Zimmern to the quote from the original directive of instructions to the committee.

⁴⁰⁸ Cecil, *A Great Experiment*.

Grotius' *opus magnum*, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, before going on to quote from the introduction of the Phillimore Report itself.⁴⁰⁹ The Phillimore Report briefly but systematically reviewed the proposals for perpetual peace from the seventeenth century onwards (generally focusing on those discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis: Sully, Abbé de St. Pierre, Kant, Bentham, the Concert of Europe and Czar Alexander 1.⁴¹⁰

The historical arguments of the Phillimore Report were not far removed from those of Elizabeth York's 1919 *Leagues of Nations: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, which was briefly mentioned in Chapter 2. Both the conclusions of the Report and the fact that the original instructions had focussed on finding historical precedents shows how the British sought to create the new League based on the solid example of past experience (repeatedly returning to plans reflecting imperial experience when it came to formulating internationalism and international peace). One of the members of the Phillimore Committee was the historian A.F. Pollard, who published a pamphlet on 'The League of Nations in History' in 1918, in which he first gave the usual summary of initiatives for world or perpetual peace, similar to the selection chosen in the Phillimore Report and by York. Pollard stated that:

The only political system which approached the idea of a League of Nations was the British Empire, and it achieved success, not by the amalgamation of independent units, but by their decentralization.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Cecil, *A Great Experiment*, pp. 48-49. Phillimore Report is quoted from p. 49-58.

⁴¹⁰ It is striking that it is almost the exact same list of proposals gathered in the later parts of York, *Leagues of Nations* and in Aksu, *Early Notions of Global Governance*. Though Aksu does not attribute his choice of collection to the Phillimore Report, it is tempting to suspect some direct or indirect inspiration.

⁴¹¹ A.F. Pollard, 'The League of Nations in History', pp. 11-12.

In the following pages, Pollard made clear that it was exactly by decentralising and letting go of control that the British Empire became a relevant model:

The British Empire is an example because England conquered its will to dominate its Dominions; but while it is an example, it is not an alternative, to the League of Nations, and it would cease to be even an example if it were used to dominate others.⁴¹²

Because, in a world of nation-states,

It is not by the repression, but only by the expression, of nationality that a League of Nations can be formed; for nationality has come to stay, and the purport of a League of Nations is to provide means for the expression of nationality in any form but war.⁴¹³

Like most of the imperialist-internationalists, Pollard was a Liberal, and the pamphlet shows how he shared their characteristic belief that the history of the Empire showed how such an entity could evolve in to an open international organisation.

In January 1919, as the peace negotiations were about to open in Paris, H.G. Wells and others published an article in *The Atlantic* on "The Idea of a League of Nations".⁴¹⁴ Among the collaborators behind the article were several of the imperialist-internationalists, including Edward Grey, Alfred Zimmern, and Gilbert Murray. Others involved included Lionel Curtis of the Round Table movement, Viscount Bryce, J.A. Spender, William Archer and H. Wickham Steed, who were all cooperating in The League of Free Nations Association.⁴¹⁵ The editorial introduction stated that "The remarkable qualifications of this group assures to their treatise a high

⁴¹² Pollard, 'The League of Nations in History', pp. 13.

⁴¹³ Pollard, 'The League of Nations in History', pp. 12.

⁴¹⁴ H.G. Wells et al, *The Idea of a League of Nations* (The Atlantic Monthly Press, Jan. 1919)

⁴¹⁵ This was a group formed in 1918 to promote the creation of a League of Nations. It soon merged with the League of Nations Society to create the League of Nations Union, of which Murray and Grey were president and vice president for many years.

place in the literature of World Peace”⁴¹⁶, and it is fair to suggest that the treatise articulated ideas that most of the imperialist-internationalists would have been happy to agree on. It is noticeable that the actual paper opens with a recitation of past attempts to promote greater unity, the vast majority of which were imperial in nature, including many of those discussed in Chapter 2 (and strikingly not used by the Phillimore Report which typically focused on more modern ideas and movements). *De Republica* by Cicero is the starting point in this paper, and from there it quickly moves through the Roman Empire (mechanical and despotic), Islam and Medieval Christianity (“excluding the unbeliever”), *De Monarchia* by Dante, and the federations of small Greek city-states. All are named as attempts to bring about “a cessation of war and a world-wide rule of international law”, though in practice only creating “unstable empire-systems of subject and sub-ordinate peoples [...] rather than real unifications”.⁴¹⁷ So while the authors of “The Idea of a League of Nations” acknowledged that the old empires had failed to deliver free cooperation, the article invited the reader to:

Consider again the numerous nations in the British Empire, which act in unison through the Imperial Government, imperfect and unrepresentative as it is [...]. What is there in common between an Australian native, a London freethinker, a Bengali villager, a Uganda gentleman, a Rand negro, and Egyptian Merchant, and a Singapore Chinaman, that they should all be capable of living as they do under one rule and one

⁴¹⁶ Wells et al, *The Idea of a League of Nations*, no page numbering.

⁴¹⁷ Wells et al, *The Idea of a League of Nations*, pp. 3-4. First quote from opening paragraph p. 3, second quote p. 4.

peace and with a common collective policy –and yet be incapable of a slightly larger cooperation with a Frenchman, a New Englander, or a Russian?⁴¹⁸

By this progression from the older and more flawed empires through to the British Empire which, though not perfect, was presented as a good model of international cooperation, the case for the possibility of worldwide cooperation through the League of Nations was made.

In addition to their writings supporting the League of Nations, Lord Philimore, Zimmern, and Murray were also—together with David Davies, W.H. Dickinson, Viscount Cave, and A.R. Kennedy—all part of a short-lived Advisory Committee set up in London to help Cecil consider the developing drafts of the League of Nations. Due to the speed of proceedings in Paris, the Committee had only just started holding meetings when Cecil realised that it would not be able to give him feedback in time for him to use it, as the reports it managed to make arrived after the relevant follow-up meetings in Paris. However, in spite of the Committee not having any practical use, its composition showed which men Cecil personally wanted to rely on for advice, and they were men for whom imperialism was a natural precursor for internationalism.⁴¹⁹

When it came to the actual drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the idea of internationalism as a successor of imperialism was also present. As was seen in Chapter 4, Smuts was as interested in the creation of the League of Nations as he was

⁴¹⁸ Wells et al, *The Idea of a League of Nations*, p. 35. It is tempting to wonder whether mentioning the Australian Aboriginal first, may not have a Murray's touch, as he frequently used the treatment of the Australian Aborigines as an example in his own writings.

⁴¹⁹ Letters and minutes of Cecil's Advisory Committee on the League of Nations, 23-27 January 1919, FO 608/240, ff. 56-62. Cecil's Advisory Committee on the League of Nations 29 January-1 February 1919, FO 698/243, ff. 35-40A

in changing the Empire into the Commonwealth. In April 1917 he formulated a first brief paragraph "in regard to a *League of Nations*" which was discussed and adopted after slight amendment by the Imperial War Cabinet on 26 April 1917.⁴²⁰ It is also worth quoting some of the lines from his speech of May 1917:

You talk of an Imperial mission. I think the British Empire has only one mission, and that is a mission for liberty and a mission for greater self-development. You represent the only system in history in which a large number of nations has been living in unity. You talk about a league of nations. You are the only league of nations that has ever existed.⁴²¹

Remembering that the purpose of the speech was first and foremost to cement Smuts' vision for the future of the British Empire-Commonwealth among senior British policy-makers, it is striking how clear his formulation of the British Empire as a proto-type League of Nations is: "You are the only league of nations that has ever existed". Smuts indisputably set up the British Empire as a relevant existing model for any new international organisation like the League.

However, there was more to Smuts' support for the League idea. While his support for the League idea during the War certainly supports that he genuinely believed in the concept, his memorandum to the War Cabinet of 3 December 1918 sets out reasons to support it, in what may be considered term of pure *Realpolitik*. He argued that Britain would need an ally in the future to manage international affairs, and that the US was a better and more natural ally than the unpredictable French. Given that Wilson had declared that the US wanted nothing but peace in the world from the

⁴²⁰ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume II.* No. 738, Letter to T. Jones, 21 April 1917, p. 477.

⁴²¹ Smuts, speech 15 May 1917.

conference, Smuts argued that helping Wilson get his League “—not merely as a formula, but a real substantive part of our future international system—” would be a political win that he could show off at home, and which would make him more amenable to support British interests on topics less close to his heart. To secure full benefits from this approach, Smuts recommended making clear to Wilson before the Conference that Britain would wholeheartedly support his League idea by presenting a draft proposal.⁴²² Cecil responded by letter to Smuts the following day, giving the memorandum his full support.⁴²³ While these rather cynic considerations could be taken to imply that Smuts and Cecil saw the League more as a tool to manipulate Wilson, than as an important initiative in its own right, their work for creating the League, both during the War and the Peace Conference, makes it more likely that they were using Smuts’ arguments as a way to win over a sceptical War Cabinet, as they were always more interested in the League than Lloyd George.⁴²⁴

In fact, Smuts presented his own draft Covenant to the War Cabinet and to President Wilson. The draft was well received, and from late December 1918 through February 1919, Smuts frequently mentioned in private correspondence that his program formed the basis of American proposals that were being made in Wilson’s name.⁴²⁵ This opinion was shared by Cecil, who in his conference diary for January 19 wrote that Wilson’s proposal was “almost entirely Smuts and Philimore combined, with

⁴²² Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51076, ff. 79-81, quote f. 80.

⁴²³ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51076, f. 82. Copy of letter from Cecil to Smuts, 4 December 1918.

⁴²⁴ As mentioned in the Introduction, Yearwood, *Guarantee of Peace* (2009), demonstrates Lloyd George’s rather limited interest in the League.

⁴²⁵ See Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV*. First the period of optimism and pride: Vol. 20, No. 258, Letter to M.C. Gillet, 27 December 1918, p. 34; Vol 98, no. 55, Letter to A. Clark, 15 January 1919, p. 43; Vol. 22, no. 202, Letter to M.C. Gillett, 29 January 1919, p. 57; (“the draft of the League of Nations has seen the daylight. It is almost entirely my original conception and I am naturally pleased at the acceptance of my ideas. I have kept well in the background so that others may have the credit for the League as in that way their co-operation could best be secured”) in vol. 98, no. 64, Letter to A. Clark, 16 February 1919, p. 71.

practically no new ideas in it",⁴²⁶ and in a draft letter to Lord Philimore from late February stated that the draft covenant discussed by the League of Nations Commission "in substance, though not in form, differs only slightly from the British draft".⁴²⁷ However, the broader peace negotiations from the middle of February onwards left Smuts increasingly uneasy, while his private correspondence from May showed that he had become bitter and disillusioned at the turn of events.⁴²⁸ In the section dealing with the later mandates of the League of Nations, an area of intense interest to Smuts, given that South Africa hoped to take control of some of the former German colonies and preferably annex them, he presented the following formulation:

That, as a successor to the Empires, the League of Nations will directly and without power of delegation watch over the relations ... of the new independent States arising from the break-up of those Empires, and will regard as a very special task the duty of conciliating and composing differences between them with a view to the maintenance of good order and general peace.⁴²⁹

The key phrase in the quote has been underlined, ie "as a successor to the Empires, the League of Nations". It should be noted that in the wider context it is clear that

⁴²⁶ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51131, f. 18.

⁴²⁷ Draft letter, Cecil to Philimore, dated Feb. 1919, and with an added comment "superseded by letter of March 4" added in pencil. FO 608/240, f. 83.

The argument the Covenant was essentially the British plan favouring British interests was also used by American detractors of the League, for example Senator Borah (R) who on February 21 had argued in the Senate that "the Constitution of the League was greatest triumph for British diplomacy in 300 years. It was practically British plan suggested by Smuts" according to a telegram sent from Washington to the Foreign Office. FO 698/243, ff.105-106.

⁴²⁸ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV*. Concern shown: Vol. 101, no. 73, Letter to D. Lloyd George, 26 March 1919, pp. 83-87; Vol. 20, no. 215, Letter to M.C: Gillett, 27 March 1919, p. 88; Vol. 22, no. 217, Letter to M.C: Gillett, 31 March 1919, p. 95; and finally upset with the Peace treaty as a whole: Vol. 98, no 77, Letter to A. Clark, 2. May 1919, p. 141; Vol. 22, No. 234, Letter to M.C: Gillett, 7 May 1919, p. 152; ("The Peace Treaty is becoming more and more an abomination to me") in Vol. 22. No. 236, Letter to M.C. Gillett, 14 May 1919, p. 157. And many, many others.

⁴²⁹ 'Proposals made by General Smuts for a League of Nations' in F. Wilson, *Origins of the League Covenant* (Hogarth Press, 1929), pp. 184-188. Quote p. 184. My underlining.

Smuts is referring to the collapsed Austrian-Hungarian, Ottoman, and German Empires, but even so, naming the League of Nations as 'successor to the Empires' is a strong formulation, which seems to make a direct link between "imperialism" and the new League of Nations. Given Smuts' speeches on the virtues of the British Empire/Commonwealth, his willingness to include this formulation may not be surprising, but it is striking that Wilson adopted his formulation in the first American draft presented to the League of Nations committee at the Paris Peace Conference, which read:

~~As successor to the Empires~~, the League of Nations is empowered, directly and without right of delegation, to watch over the relations inter se of all new independent states ~~arising or created out of the Empires~~, and shall assume and fulfil the duty of conciliating and composing differences between them with a view to the maintenance of settled order and the general peace.⁴³⁰

As can be seen, some changes have been made to the formulation, but the key phrase 'as successor to the Empires, the League of Nations' remains. However, while Smuts and Wilson were both happy with that phrasing, someone else, possibly Cecil himself, was not. The copy of the American draft in Cecil's archives has parts of the text crossed out in pink ink (presumably originally red), which is here represented by the strikethrough of the relevant words. While the corrections in the various drafts in Cecil's archives have not been signed, they are most likely Cecil's own, as use of that colour ink is consistent with Cecil's signed comments in documents found in Foreign Office papers from the Conference, in which no two commentators have used the

⁴³⁰ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51116, ff. 1-5, quote f. 5. The draft in the archive is not specifically dated, but hand written note on cover states "President Wilson's Copy" other notes on copy are "1st Ed." and "1" and "I". Strikethrough represents the places where the text had been edited by hand and parts crossed out.

same colour.⁴³¹ In the edited version of the first American draft, all references to the Empires thus fell out, and they do not return in the finished version of the Covenant. Given that the rejection of the phrase “As successor to the Empires” came from the British side, it is easy to suspect that a possible source of objection might be the implication that the League of Nations should replace all empires, that is not only of the defunct Ottoman, German, and Austro-Hungarian Empires, but also the British Empire, (an implication which would obviously be unacceptable to the British delegation).

In spite of the British rejection of the part of Smuts' formulation relating to the League as “successor to the Empires”, the general trend of the processes for making a British proposal for a League of Nations—in the official Phillimore Committee, in Smuts' input, and in the published writings of the imperialist-internationalists—was clearly one of using historical examples of empires in general, and the British Empire in particular, as relevant models for enhancing international peace and cooperation. There was widespread support for the idea that the right—British—kind of imperialism as a precursor for internationalism.

5.2 Using the British Empire as a model for the League of Nations

While it was one thing theoretically to consider imperial models as precursors of internationalism and international organisations, that alone would not ensure that any empire, let alone the British Empire, was used as a practical model for creating the League of Nations. However, while the British delegation was not entirely successful

⁴³¹ See for example comments 9 or 10 January 1919, FO 608/242 f. 470, comments 1 February 1919, FO 698/243, f.35, and comments 6 February 1919, FO 698/243, f.42, all of which displays signed corrections in three different colours, with Cecil consistently in faded red ink.

in its attempts to get British modes of operation written into the Covenant, it will be seen below that Cecil's delegation did base some of its practical suggestions on intra-imperial models of collaboration. This section also shows how Zimmern and Hall saw additional ways in which the League of Nations would benefit from copying the British Empire-Commonwealth.

5.2.1 The Conference System

A very specific point where the British delegation aimed—and failed—was in proposing that the League should imitate the imperial system of cooperation symbolised by the Imperial Conferences. The system of Imperial Conferences had developed since the late nineteenth century as a means of securing regular consultation between the government at Westminster and the governments of the self-governing colonies (later known as Dominions). While the conferences were originally mainly designed to inform the “local” governments of Imperial policy, they had increasingly become a forum for intra-imperial communication, where Westminster remained in the lead but Dominion representatives were vocal about their ideas on Imperial policy. Originally meeting at fairly irregular intervals, it had become established custom that the Imperial Conference should meet every four years at least, though not much more frequently given the significant travel-time from the furthest Dominions (all participants were expected to send their Prime Minister to assure that the Conferences could both hold discussions and make decisions). The value of face to face meetings by the relevant leaders was considered a key part of the success of the Conference system. In a set of “observations” for the consideration of the War Cabinet, Maurice Hankey, the highly influential cabinet secretary, noted that the regular meetings and social gatherings of ministers and officials during the War had meant that “the atmosphere of these Conferences have gradually improved, and

that business is easier to transact than formerly. [...] The result is a much greater mutual understanding. So it will be with the League of Nations."⁴³² The general faith in the value of Conferences was such that it was suggested that "Had we had a Council-meeting in 1914 -i.e. if Sir E. Grey's proposal for a conference had been taken– there [would] have been a good chance of averting war."⁴³³ The idea of copying the Conference system was essential to the British model.

Several documents on drafting the League of Nations Covenant from the Cecil Papers show the British attempt to copy this system into the formation of the League of Nations. An early draft, of very uncertain dating, introduces the conference system for the League as follows:

Organisation of the League of Nations [...] Art.5. Within six months from the date of the present Convention, and thereafter in every fourth year from the date of the present Convention there shall be held a general Conference of the League, composed of responsible representatives of the States members of the League. Wherever possible, these responsible representatives shall be the Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of the States. This quadrennial conference is hereafter referred to as the "Conference of the League".⁴³⁴

As mentioned, the dating is very uncertain. On the first page of the manuscript, in pen, it reads "Sept. 1916 or May 1917" but added in pencil it states "[aft 17 Dec. 1918?]",⁴³⁵ suggesting a two-year span in which it could have been created. Certainly the Conference idea was already being discussed around May 1917, as Smuts noted in one of his speeches that month that he considered "a periodic conference or other

⁴³² CAB/24/39, 'War Cabinet. League of Nations. Observations by the Secretary' (16 Jan. 1919), p. 4.

⁴³³ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51102, f. 85. Comment added on the back of the folio in blue ink, date of document unsure, further explanation in the following paragraph.

⁴³⁴ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51102, f. 72.

⁴³⁵ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51102, f. 72.

institution” capable of giving a future League of Nations flexibility to follow the developments “essential”.⁴³⁶ Irrespective of the actual dating, it does appear to be one of the early specific drafts of the Covenant, at this stage called “Convention”, and as seen it clearly reflects the conference system of the Empire, with the basic model of a fixed conference every four years with “responsible representatives”.

On 17 December 1918, the latest possible dating of the previous document, Cecil presented a memorandum to the War Cabinet known as the “Cecil Draft”, which was prepared in the Foreign Office after the Phillimore Report with Alfred Zimmern as one of its main authors. Zimmern stated specifically in both a 1923 and a 1924 paper, that the main influence for the Cecil Draft was the Conference system.⁴³⁷ A brief chapter on its conception, as well as the full text of the memorandum can be found in Zimmern’s, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*.⁴³⁸ Zimmern noted that the idea of a conference system for the League of Nations was inspired both by the War Council and the Imperial Conferences:

This system of regular meetings between governments, established long before the war, had not only stood the strain of war conditions but had emerged greatly strengthened, with a fine record of work to its credit. Diplomacy by Conference had proved its value during the war.⁴³⁹

That inspiration could be seen directly in the Cecil Draft in section “II. Arrangements for Regular Conference”, which clearly set out that the “fundamental principle of the

⁴³⁶ Smuts’ speech at a meeting held at the Central Hall, Westminster, May 14, 1917 (the day before his ‘Bonds of Empire’ speech extensively quoted in chapter 4) in J. Smuts et al, ‘General Smuts and a League of Nations’, *League of Nations Society Publications, No. 11* (League of Nations Society, 1st ed. May 1917), pp. 10-11.

⁴³⁷ Zimmern, ‘International Organisation. Its Prospects and Limitations’ and ‘The League and the Old Diplomacy’ both in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*, p. 226 and pp. 200-201.

⁴³⁸ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 190-209.

⁴³⁹ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, p. 191.

League would be that it is a meeting of Governments with Governments”, which would best be achieved by the foreign secretaries of the great powers meeting annually, while the foreign secretaries of all the League members should meet less regularly, “possibly every four or five years”.⁴⁴⁰

On new year’s day 1919, at a Foreign Office meeting including leading representatives of the Dominions and India, the model was presented quite simply as the “Quadrennial Meeting of representatives of all States included in the League”,⁴⁴¹ specifying that “the Dominions and India should have the right to their own representatives at the Quadrennial Meeting of all States included in the League.”⁴⁴²

An additional higher tier of annual meetings by the Great Powers was added, in recognition that quadrennial meetings might not be enough at the highest level, and it was again reiterated that representatives at the meetings should be Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers. These proposals were in all essentials the same as the Cecil Draft.

By the time of the actual negotiations of the Covenant, the British “Draft Convention”, dated 20 January 1919, suggested a wording almost identical to the first draft:

4. A General Conference of the League shall be held within six months of the date when the present Convention comes into force, and similar conferences shall be held from time to time as occasion may require, and in any case at intervals of not more than four years. A general Conference shall be composed of responsible representatives of the States members of the League⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, all quotes from “II. Arrangements for Regular Conference” point 1., p. 204.

⁴⁴¹ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51105, f. 185.

⁴⁴² Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51105, f. 186.

⁴⁴³ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51116, f. 6.

The biggest difference, compared to the first draft discussed above, was the proposal that the Conference, now called General Conference of the League, should be composed of “responsible representatives” without it being specified that they should be Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers (though it was still intended that these representatives should have full bargaining powers).

The attempt by the British to encourage the League to follow the Imperial Conference system in many respects failed. The fourth American draft of the Covenant, dated 3 February 1919, made no mention of any conference of heads of state or similar dignitaries but instead called for:

Meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be held from time to time [pencil note: “at stated intervals”] as occasion may require for the purpose of dealing with matters within the sphere of action of the League. Meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be held at the capital of the League or at such other place as may be found convenient and shall consist of ~~not more than two representatives of each of the H.C.P. An~~ ambassadors or ministers of one of the H.C.P. [High Contracting Parties] ~~shall be~~ competent to act as its representative.⁴⁴⁴

So, instead of a General Conference of the League attended by Prime Ministers, it became a meeting of a “Body of Delegates” which, rather than meeting at least every four years on a fixed basis, would meet “from time to time”. It does appear that the British negotiators were successful in retaining a commitment to some degree of regularity of meetings, with the added words “at stated intervals”, but not in preventing the downgrading of representatives to “ambassadors or ministers” who

⁴⁴⁴ Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51116, f. 47. The text was edited, probably by Cecil, in red/pink ink. “not more than two representatives of each of the H.C.P.” and “shall be competent to act as its representative” were crossed out, and the plural s for ambassador and minister were written in.

were unlikely to be able to negotiate on behalf of their governments beyond the remit they had been given.

Ultimately, as is well known, the League ended up with the General Assembly, which had little resemblance to the Conference of the League suggested by the British, though not for want of trying from the British side. However, Hall and Zimmern still considered the Conference system a model for another part of the structure of the League, namely the League Council, which to a degree matched the idea of a 'higher tier' of Conference of the Great Powers mentioned in the Cecil Draft and the Foreign Office meeting with the Dominions on 1 January 1919.⁴⁴⁵

5.2.2 Other specific functions

While the Conference system was intended to be copied as general 'machinery of co-operation' for the League of Nations, the Empire was also seen as a model for the League in terms of the functions it was to fulfil. Zimmern and Hall specifically explained how they saw the British Empire as an actual international organisation that had hitherto been responsible for a range of worldwide issues that could now be passed on to the League of Nations. Delving into some of these areas, it is very clear that their thoughts are from a different time and mind frame, as proposals they considered liberal and forward thinking now seem deeply reactionary (and, in some cases, frankly offensive). In the *Third British Empire* lectures, Zimmern set forth a list of areas apart from the Conference system where the Empire was a model for the League, "When I say that we anticipated the League of Nations I am speaking

⁴⁴⁵ Zimmern compares the Council with the Conference system, outlining the main differences in Zimmern, 'The League and the Old Diplomacy' in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*, p. 201-203.

precisely. We did so in three special directions."⁴⁴⁶ The three directions were outlined as trusteeship, international policing, and the peaceful settlement of international.⁴⁴⁷

Trusteeship is probably the most controversial of the topics seen through modern eyes, but in the view of Zimmern, who had no direct experience of colonial government, it was the difference between ruling the colonies for the sake of exploiting them to the benefit of the imperial hegemon, and ruling them for the sake of their native inhabitants, with a view to developing political and cultural maturity for future self-government. He argued that the choice that had faced those who built the Empire was between "unregulated commercial exploitation and paternal government", and by choosing paternal government the Empire "anticipated the League of Nations. We established a system of trusteeship, but without any authority to whom we were responsible."⁴⁴⁸ While he acknowledged that this unregulated trusteeship was not without failures and blemishes, he felt that "if you take our colonial record as a whole, I believe that history will justify it",⁴⁴⁹ and suggested that "the criticism we invite is that we are so public-spirited, so ready to do crusading, that we sometimes feel impelled to interfere to clean up abuses which the victims themselves would have preferred to leave untouched."⁴⁵⁰ In other words, in Zimmern's view Britain had generally been effective and beneficial in governing the colonies, and had shown that the principle of trusteeship was a worthwhile endeavour,

⁴⁴⁶ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 77.

⁴⁴⁷ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 60, and pp. 77-80.

⁴⁴⁸ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, both quotes p. 77.

⁴⁴⁹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, both acknowledgment of failures and quote from p. 79.

⁴⁵⁰ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 79-80. One example that Zimmern might have had in mind is the Indian tradition of *Suttee/Sati*, the burning of the widow on the pyre of her husband, which was banned by the British against Indian protests. One good modern examination of the issue of *Suttee* is L. Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Banning of Sati in Colonial India* (University of California Press, 1998).

which could be developed worldwide with international supervision through the League.

Already in the Cecil Draft of December 1918, the idea of trusteeships was listed under 'Treaty Provisions' VII, which stated that "The treaty should give precision to the idea of the responsibility of the civilised States to the more backward peoples",⁴⁵¹ and went on to explain how specific mandates should be set up under League supervision and authority.⁴⁵² Smuts' proposal for the League from the same month also explored trusteeship as seen above, and had the issue of mandates among its first points made (section A, 2.-9.). However, given Smuts' strong preference for the outright annexation of some former German colonies by South Africa, he made no mention of civilised responsibility, though his suggestion, like the Cecil Draft, left it to the League to draw up the conditions of the mandatory power. His proposals let the League "reserve to it the complete power of ultimate control and supervision as well as the right to appeal to it from the territory or people affected against any gross breach or the mandate by the mandatory power"⁴⁵³ —words which suggest that Smuts too supported the idea of international supervision against some set standards.⁴⁵⁴

The Covenant of the League itself details the principles of mandates in Article 22, over nine points that have more in common with the idealism of Zimmern and the Cecil Draft than with the more restricted formulations of Smuts. According to Article

⁴⁵¹ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, p. 203.

⁴⁵² Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 203-204.

⁴⁵³ 'Proposals made by General Smuts for a League of Nations' in Wilson, *Origins of the League Covenant*, pp. 184-185, quote p. 185.

⁴⁵⁴ The particularly brutal rule of the Congo Free State by Leopold II of Belgium, who held the colony as a virtual private property from 1885 to 1908 had been the cause of international outrage and an international parliamentary commission, which led to such public and diplomatic pressure, that the Congo was annexed as a Belgian colony. Memories of the outrage, was certainly a main reason for setting up international mandates. Reference to the case can be found in Zimmern, 'Some Principles and Problems of the Peace Conference' in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*, p. 176 (the article was originally published in the *Round Table*, November 1918).

22, the governance of people “not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world” should be applied on “the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation”.⁴⁵⁵ With this combination of White Man’s Burden and the liberal ideology of developing the peoples of the mandates towards self-government, the Covenant fulfilled Zimmern’s ideas of the League as a successor to the Empire in terms of trusteeship and paternalistic government.

Hall, also hailed the Empire as a model for trusteeship:

The most striking of all the ways in which the British Empire has served as a model for the League of Nations is to be seen in the clauses for the Covenant which embody the mandatory principle. These clauses adopt the best features of the best English practice with regard to tropical dependencies, notably the principle of the open door, or equal economic opportunities for all nations, and the principle of non-militarisation of the native inhabitants.⁴⁵⁶

However, Hall also took a more critical approach, and argued that the British Empire, had the potential to be:

for good or for evil a decisive influence on the development of the mandatory principle. If the peoples of the British Commonwealth are content to remain passive and ignorant with regard to native races, they will be responsible for making the mandatory principle a mere cloak for capitalist imperialism. If, on the other hand, they insist on a generous fulfilment on the principle of trusteeship –which means nothing less than the preparation of dependencies for ultimate self-government [...] then the

⁴⁵⁵ ‘The Covenant of The League of Nations’ in Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, quotes p. 522.

⁴⁵⁶ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 336.

British Peoples may cause the adoption of the mandatory principle to be regarded as one of the most beneficent advances ever made in human history.⁴⁵⁷

As discussed in further detail later in this chapter, Hall thought the British Empire was a model for the League not only in terms of government but also in terms of the voluntary societies, which in his estimate were largely responsible for the degree to which the Empire had applied the principles of trusteeship in its colonies so far.⁴⁵⁸

Zimmern noted in *The Third British Empire* that “the British Empire anticipated the League of Nations by developing an international police force”. He argued that the Royal Navy had served a policing function in many instances during the nineteenth century, not least in its work to end the trade with slaves: “In this matter, the British Navy was the champion of common human rights”.⁴⁵⁹ In reality, the League was not actually given any specific mandate for international policing, but rather a role of general supervision on such issues as the prohibition of the slave trade, trafficking of women and children, and trade in narcotics—though without any clear specifications on how this supervision would take place.⁴⁶⁰

The final specific area in which the Empire was a model for the League, according to Zimmern, was that of the peaceful settlement of disputes, “We anticipated the dispute clauses of the Covenant of the League of Nations. We established an obligatory system for the peaceful settlement of disputes within the British Empire.”⁴⁶¹ It is interesting to notice that Zimmern did not suggest that the imperial dispute system was ideal or always reached the right decisions. Giving the example of the dispute

⁴⁵⁷ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 363.

⁴⁵⁸ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 363-364.

⁴⁵⁹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 79.

⁴⁶⁰ ‘The Covenant of the League of Nations’ in Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 523-524.

⁴⁶¹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 77.

between South Africa and India over the treatment of Indians in South Africa, Zimmern argued that if they had been independent countries outside the system of the British Empire, the dispute could easily have led to a breakdown of diplomatic relations and potentially to hostile actions between the two countries. However, inside the Empire, "the British system narrowed the dispute, dangerous and inflammatory as it was, to a discussion between the India Office and the Colonial Office",⁴⁶² thus containing it by clearly delegating the power of reaching a resolution. Zimmern acknowledged that the settlement had not been particularly good, but "in the modern world almost any settlement is more satisfactory than war. The Pax Britannica is an imposed peace, and has the advantages and disadvantages of any system of imposed peace."⁴⁶³ In a similar way, disputes between members of the League of Nations would be referred to arbitration or settlement to the Council of the League, where the issue could be narrowed down and settled without the need for armed conflict. Zimmern left it open to the reader to conclude that dispute settlements by the League might often result in equally unsatisfactory outcomes and yet be preferable to war. It is therefore clear that while the imperialist-internationalists believed that the Conference system provided an appropriate model which the British Empire could offer to the League of Nations, and that the Empire had already led the way in the nineteenth century on issues of global governance and respect for human dignity, they believed that it was now time to hand over responsibility for these tasks from imperial to universal responsibility.

5.2.3 The wider model of Cooperation

⁴⁶² Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 78.

⁴⁶³ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 78. Compare Zimmern's comments to Parchami's work on Pax, described in Chapter Two.

Beyond Imperial Conferences, trusteeship, international policing, and dispute settlement there were far wider areas in which the imperialist-internationalists aimed to model the League on the British Empire. Hall's *The British Commonwealth of Nations* dedicated the final chapter to "The British Group and the League of Nations", the first section of which was on 'The British Commonwealth as the Model of the League'.⁴⁶⁴ In this part, Hall gave praise to the British system and changed the focus on how to secure peace:

The experience of the British Commonwealth has gone far to prove that peace is a by-product of normal and healthy international co-operation, and that the way to discover peace is not to be obsessed with the idea of avoiding war—because those who are obsessed with the idea of avoiding a thing are most likely to collide with it—but to be filled with the desire to co-operate with a view to enable each people to live, in the fullest measure, the good life. The new principle of international relations which shines out from the lengthy and somewhat dreary debates of the Imperial Conference on such questions as emigration, commercial relations and communications, is the principle of mutual service between nations in matters of living everyday interest.⁴⁶⁵

In other words, if the League of Nations focussed on international cooperation, peace would come as a natural side-effect, while straining too hard to make the League a forum narrowly focussed on securing peace would be more likely to promote war than to hinder it.⁴⁶⁶

The Cecil Draft suggested a range of international bodies that could be seen as comparable to some of the joint bodies of the Empire, in one case making a direct

⁴⁶⁴ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*. Chapter XI, pp. 329-371, section 1, pp. 330-335.

⁴⁶⁵ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 331.

⁴⁶⁶ It is worth remembering that the basis for the Steel and Coal Community was exactly the idea of securing peace through promoting interconnecting economic interests between France, Germany, and the Benelux countries.

comparison to an existing Imperial board.⁴⁶⁷ In the beginning and end of the section on 'International Bodies for Study and Enquiry', the Cecil Draft expressed strong sentiments on the importance of international cooperation in a wide array of areas:

The chief dangers to the world's peace in the future arise in connexion with problems which are not at present, and will perhaps never be, ripe for judicial determination. The League of Nations will be incomplete unless it sets on foot arrangements by which such problems can be discussed from different points of view in an atmosphere of study and detachment.⁴⁶⁸

The association in this work of some of the best brains from a number of different countries should promote a process of political invention which may be of very great service to civilisation. Experience shows that internationalism, which may be defined as the habit of looking at problems from the point of view of the world as a whole, can best be developed in an atmosphere of this kind.⁴⁶⁹

The bodies tentatively suggested were to be on topics of such universal interests as justice, health, industrial conditions, finance and currency, transit (land, sea, and air), conservation of resources, equality of trade conditions, race relations, and "the problems of the Tropics".⁴⁷⁰

While only one of the bodies suggested in the Cecil Draft was directly compared to a matching Imperial body, Hall discussed the "Machinery of Co-operation" of the British Empire/Commonwealth with a stress on the various joint bodies such as Committee of Imperial Defence, the Pacific Cable Board, and the Imperial Bureau of Mycology, which were he considered:

⁴⁶⁷ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, '(iv) Conservation of Resources', p. 207.

⁴⁶⁸ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, p. 206.

⁴⁶⁹ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, p. 208.

⁴⁷⁰ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 206-207.

The beginnings of a complex organisation which will be of the utmost value, not only to the British Empire, but also to the League of Nations. It is obvious that they are the forerunners of a vast network of similar bodies, which will make possible inter-Imperial co-operation on a gigantic scale for the development of the political, social and economic life of the peoples of the British Empire. Their significance for the League of Nations lies in the fact that the British Empire is already becoming a pioneer of internationalism – a vast laboratory of international government.⁴⁷¹

It is reasonable to compare Hall's 'joint bodies' with the 'international bodies' suggested by the Cecil Draft as essential to the operation of the League of Nations. The benefits of these bodies were self-evident for the people who were part of them, as cooperation across the Empire secured the faster spread of new knowledge and inventions, and more efficient work on issues of common interests. The benefit of international scale was expected to be the same, only greater, with the League, promoting co-operation and educating people in the advantages of cooperation over hostile competition. As Hall concluded, when revisiting the issue of joint bodies in his section on the Empire as a model for the League:

If this opportunity is seized the League will become the director and supervisor of a vast network of international councils and bureaux, including all the international bodies, such as the Universal Postal Union, already in existence, and the large number of new international bodies which have been found necessary during the war, and will be equally necessary in some form or other to satisfy their requirements in time of

⁴⁷¹ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 296.

An interesting example of the Empire as testing ground of international cooperation within the League, is the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, which was set up in 1910 and from 1922 cooperated with the International Committee on International Cooperation of the League, which Murray and Zimmern were both involved with. By 1923 the director of the Universities Bureau was writing his advice to Professor Halecki of the International Committee, on the basis that the Universities Bureau had the most experience, as the longest standing organization of its kind. League of Nations Archive, R1042/13C/27031/22413, Letter Dr. Hill to Prof. Halecki, 28 February 1923.

peace. As we have seen, the working out of the same principle of mutual service is leading to a somewhat similar result in the British Group of States [...] ⁴⁷²

The actual negotiations of the Covenant of the League of Nations showed that, at least to some extent, an effort was made to secure a range of joint bodies. On 22-23 March 1919, the League of Nations commission met with representatives of the lesser powers, who had been given a draft Covenant published 14 February 1919 to read and comment on. During the debates, Robert Cecil pointed out that "The Commission had been anxious to give the League a sphere of continuous international activity in addition to its primary duty, which was that of keeping the world's peace." ⁴⁷³ In the final League Covenant, Articles 23, 24, and 25 relate to issues of joint bodies or topics that could be put under the control of joint bodies, ⁴⁷⁴ and by 1925 Zimmern confirmed the importance of these bodies in the second of his American lectures, stating that,

Most important of all, the League is a standing agency of co-operation in matters of common concern to all civilized peoples. Its action in this sphere has passed unnoticed by the general public because most of the matters with which it deals involve no important elements of controversy and conflicting interest. Health, communication, intellectual co-operation are not subjects which occupy headlines or fall within the sphere of high policy. Nevertheless, they are vital to the maintenance of civilization, and it is in this region that the co-operative method has achieved its most important results. ⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 333.

The Universal Postal Union was a basic reference for successful international cooperation, also where shared costs were involved. In the first British Draft for the League of Nations presented at the Peace talks on 20 January, it was suggested that the expenses of the League should be shared "in accordance with the distribution among the members of the Postal Union" (Cecil of Chelwood Papers. Add MS 51116, f.7), a principle which made it into the original Covenant of the League, though it was changed by amendment in 1924 (Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, p. 514).

⁴⁷³ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51117, f. 39, discussion of articles on arms trade, labour conditions, and commerce.

⁴⁷⁴ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 523-525.

⁴⁷⁵ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 59.

Thus, the imperialist-internationalists propagated the notion that international cooperation at an organised level should cover a wide array of issues common to humanity. They believed that this approach was an essential part of securing international peace and that this was a lesson that could be learnt from the experience of the British Empire.

Another aspect of cooperation that Hall considered vital, and which could clearly be upscaled to international level, was the voluntary intra-imperial organizations which he considered a key part of giving the Empire any meaning at all:

These [voluntary] associations are, indeed, the fine flower of the group life, a sign of what the fellowship means in human terms. They, and not the major governmental organs, are the measure of the strength of feeling and the community of interests which bind the peoples of the Group together. They are also the greatest assurance of the permanence of the Group as they are one of the most important factors in human life, because they are the creation, and partly the creators, of the strongest bond of Empire – the human tie.⁴⁷⁶

A very similar sentiment was later echoed by Zimmern in *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, in which he compared voluntary organisation in the Commonwealth and the League, writing that:

Voluntary and unofficial action in the international field is, for the most part, beyond our scope. Nevertheless it is one of the principle elements in the whole international problem and its existence must be kept in mind by every student of the subject.

Without the co-operation of voluntary agencies intergovernmental organisation can

⁴⁷⁶ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 299.

never proceed very far. It is not governments but peoples that give international relations both their substance and their particular tone.⁴⁷⁷

Zimmern believed that if the voluntary associations had helped to create within the British Empire a kind of 'group feeling', almost a Hegelian spirit, then a greater sense of universalism and common public opinion could be fostered by the League if it could develop in a similar way. The weight of importance Hall attached to these joint bodies and voluntary associations can be seen in two appendices he carefully prepared on the machinery of cooperation and a list of the voluntary associations.⁴⁷⁸

To conclude, then, while the joint bodies and voluntary organisations of the Empire were, in most cases, not directly engaged with peace work, Hall and Zimmern considered their day to day work essential for creating the habit of peaceful cooperation for the common good. They therefore welcomed the fact that both the Cecil Draft and the Covenant of the League of Nations ensured that the principle of ongoing cooperation was incorporated into the foundations of the League.

5.2.4 Detractors of the League on the Empire as a model

It may appear unsurprising that the people actively involved in both the process of creating the League of Nations, and the development of Empire into Commonwealth, would see a connection between these two phenomena. However, various writings by Leo Amery, a confirmed detractor of the whole idea of the League of Nations, shows that even though he disagreed with the idea of the League he still thought that the British side based their proposals for the League on experience from the Empire.

⁴⁷⁷ Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁷⁸ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 328.

As an ardent imperialist and proponent of imperial preference in trade, Amery's open allegiance was always to the Empire rather than to world peace, reflecting a "Hobbesian view on international politics" according to Wm. Roger Louis.⁴⁷⁹ In his memoirs, *My Political Life*, Amery recalled how he had circulated in the War Cabinet "a detailed criticism of the, to my mind, dangerously misleading conception of a League of Nations",⁴⁸⁰ and quoted a letter he had written to Lord Reading in October 1919 where he concluded that "some sham structure of a League of Nations which, like the Holy Alliance, will break down and become a laughing-stock within a few years".⁴⁸¹ He himself favoured a new system of balance of power between various blocks of power, such as The British Empire, the United States, and some continental European block.⁴⁸² Amery's published diaries consistently refer to the League in a negative light.⁴⁸³ As early as December 1916 he dismissively stated that the idea of "leagues of peace [...] are all fudge" in a letter to Robert Cecil,⁴⁸⁴ and on 30 January 1919 he noted in his diary that there was no point fussing about what was meant by "mandatory occupation" by "a League of Nations which isn't going to exist and won't affect anybody".⁴⁸⁵ In March 1919 he told Smuts that "there is no need for anyone to worry about the League of Nations, [...] it isn't going to make any difference to anybody"⁴⁸⁶.

⁴⁷⁹ Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!*, p. 76.

⁴⁸⁰ Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II*, p. 160. Amery does not specify when he had circulated these ideas, but presumably 1918.

⁴⁸¹ Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II*, p. 163.

⁴⁸² Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II*, p. 161-162. See also Amery, 'The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea' (1930), pp. 1-22, in which Amery developed the idea of a continental European block in detail.

⁴⁸³ J. Barnes and D. Nicholson (ed.s), *The Leo Amery Diaries, Vol. I & II* (Hutchinson, 1980 & 1988).

⁴⁸⁴ Barnes and Nicholson, *The Leo Amery Diaries, Vol. I: 1896-1929*, p. 133: letter to Lord Robert Cecil, 23 December 1916.

⁴⁸⁵ Barnes and Nicholson, *The Leo Amery Diaries, Vol. I*, p. 253.

⁴⁸⁶ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV.*, Vol 21, no 5, Letter from L.S. Amery, 20 March 1919, p. 78.

Yet although Amery was dismissive of the League of Nations, in his correspondence with Smuts, with whom he was on good terms, he had from the start supported the idea that *if* the League of Nations was to be created then it should be based on the British Empire. In December 1918, Amery was among those who received a draft of Smuts' proposal for the League, replying that "I am in entire agreement [...] that the experience of the working of the existing League of Free Nations, viz., the British Commonwealth, affords the best guide to the constitution of the League of Nations".⁴⁸⁷ In his memoirs, he supported that notion, when he wrote in his criticism of the League that in the middle of the mess of idealistic and unrealistic ideas Smuts "set himself to converting Wilson's vague phrases into a world-wide enlargement of the Imperial War Cabinet, with a more democratic Imperial Conference in form of an Assembly attached to it."⁴⁸⁸ However, while Amery reluctantly accepted that Smuts' original version might not be entirely disastrous, he thought that Cecil had strengthened the most dubious parts of Smuts' model, while ignoring "his sager qualifications".⁴⁸⁹ In the third volume of his memoirs, Amery reviewed the competing conceptions of the League, noting that Smuts like many others in Britain had a:

more realist outlook of those who saw in the League a valuable instrument for promoting international understanding and co-operation, providing standing machinery for conciliation available to all who were willing to be conciliated, the centre of an ever-increasing number of beneficent international activities, a forum of world opinion, growing in authority as it succeeded in its tasks, but relying throughout on its moral influence and not on coercion. [...] What is more, they felt instinctively that

⁴⁸⁷ Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume IV.*, Vol. 19, no. 18, Letter from L.S. Amery, 17 December 1918, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁸⁸ Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II*, p. 164.

⁴⁸⁹ Amery, *My Political Life, Vol II*, p. 165.

coercion was contrary to the whole spirit of free co-operation which alone could give real life to the new system. It was an illogical but characteristically British outlook, influenced by our experience of the working of our own Commonwealth Conference.⁴⁹⁰

The description here of a “realist outlook” or “British outlook” is very close to the position of men like Hall and Zimmern.⁴⁹¹ Although Amery himself emphatically opposed any form of a League of Nations, he believed that such an organisation would be most likely to have success if it was designed by those who, like Smuts, wanted it to incorporate the pattern of cooperation that supposedly characterised relations between Great Britain and the dominions.

-An English League-

A final aspect worth investigating in the context of the Empire/Commonwealth being used as a model for the League of Nations is the issue of the essential value of Englishness or Britishness (a subject also discussed in Chapter 4 when looking at the cultural foundations of Commonwealth).

As noted in Chapter 4, Smuts and Murray seemed directly to distinguish the British values of open fairmindedness from the tendency of other nations to be more smallminded and egoistically focussed on their own interests. Hall, in many ways like Smuts, considered the English speaking people, whether from Britain, the Dominions, or the United States, particularly good at developing and spreading—within the English speaking world—new new ideas and technology. Zimmern by contrast took a strong stance on the importance of the Empire *not* being an English Empire, though

⁴⁹⁰ Amery, *My Political Life, Vol III*, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁹¹ There can be no doubt that Amery was familiar with Duncan Hall's work. In 1921, he referred to the ideas of Duncan Hall in a letter to Smuts dated 21 June. Barnes and Nicholson, *The Leo Amery Diaries, Vol. I*, pp. 273-274: Letter to Smuts, 21 June 1921.

he too emphasised how 'Britishness' could assume an almost international identity, which ultimately came very close to the very values celebrated by Smuts and Murray. In the words of Amery, recently quoted above, among the partisans of the League the "more realist outlook" was a "British outlook",⁴⁹² so it should be little surprise that the imperialist-internationalists saw the spread of a British or English approach to international affairs as essential to the success of the League.

Hall spoke directly about the "greater capacity of the British Peoples for international co-operation,"⁴⁹³ based on their understanding of the benefits and necessity of such cooperation, and he assumed that, for the time being, it would be hard to foster international cooperation on world scale. His dearest hopes were for closer cooperation between the British Commonwealth and the United States, "based on the strongest of all reasons – the fundamental identity of the English speaking peoples in language, institutions, laws, ideas, and traditions"⁴⁹⁴, things which in his opinion would "build the strongest of all guarantees of the success of the League of Nations and of the beginning of a reign of peace upon the earth"⁴⁹⁵. In short, the English character was a defining element in creating a viable internationalism.

Zimmern, for all his focus on internationalism, defined the English concept of character as that of the English gentleman, whom he thought,

represents a specific and clearly marked type of civilized humanity. [...] He has evolved his own special technique of government, the result of a long development and much stored up experience. [...] For courage, for honour and loyalty, for tolerance, for wisdom and calm judgement, for self-control in emergencies, I doubt the world has

⁴⁹² Amery, *My Political Life, Vol III*, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁹³ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 361.

⁴⁹⁴ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 370.

⁴⁹⁵ Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 371.

ever seen his equal. [...] The English gentleman has been, in fact, an unrivalled teacher of peoples.⁴⁹⁶

In other words, Zimmern offered an uncritical celebration of the glory of the English character—very similar to the view of Smuts and Murray—emphasising how it could be a role model for the rest of the world. He had presented a similar view in an article published in the *Round Table* in November 1918, where he supported the notion, attributed to Churchill, that

the general adoption by other Governments of an attitude of frankness and openness, such as has been customary in this country, as to expenditure on armaments will by itself exercise a powerful and beneficial effect on the international atmosphere.⁴⁹⁷

Clearly, in Zimmern's view, Britain was the teacher of the world, and ultimately the Empire was suitable as a model for the League of Nations both in terms of its culture as well as its mode of operation. All in all, it is fair to conclude that, to the imperialist-internationalists, it was not simply the machinery and functions of the British Empire that made it a model for the League of Nations. It was also what they perceived as the distinctive combination of goodwill and hard-headedness displayed by the English-speaking people—or perhaps more specifically the British—on questions of international cooperation.

5.3 Conclusions

Published materials dating from both before and after the creation of the League of Nations show that the imperialist-internationalists were committed both to the general idea that imperial experience could provide lessons to promote internationalism and more specifically that the British Empire could offer a specific model for the League

⁴⁹⁶ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 75.

⁴⁹⁷ Zimmern, 'Some Principles and Problems of the Peace Conference', p. 173.

of Nations. They focussed on cultural aspects, such as the British or English capacity for international cooperation and fairness, as well as on more specific institutional features of the British Empire (in particular the Conference System and the wide selection of joint bodies and voluntary organisations). When it came to the idea of the Empire as a more general predecessor, it was argued to be a model for the principle of trusteeship, for international policing of human rights, and of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Smuts, Zimmern, and Cecil—who were all involved in creating the Covenant of the League—were active in promoting the Empire/Commonwealth as a relevant model. They did so both in public speeches and in government proposals for the Covenant. Detractors of the League, such as Amery, also recognised their attempt to use the Empire as a model. “The Covenant, as it emerged from the Paris Conference, was what the textual critics call a conflation, but its main source was British, and it is not claiming too much to say that its “archetype” was the “Cecil Draft”.”⁴⁹⁸ Thus Alfred Zimmern summed up the Covenant, and indirectly his own importance, in an article published February 1924. While not all British proposals were incorporated into the Covenant, Hall and Zimmern both continued to argue throughout the 1920s and 1930s that the ideas and experiences of those familiar with the British Empire had played a significant part in helping to shape the creation of the League.

⁴⁹⁸ Zimmern, ‘The League and the Old Diplomacy’ in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy* (1929), p. 199. The article was first published in *Contemporary Review*, February, 1924.

6: '*A league within the League*': The British Commonwealth of Nations 1926

The previous chapters have shown a line of continuity from ideas about empires as centres of international organisation and peace, through the education of the imperialist-internationalists, who connected that tradition to their ideas on the development of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth, and on to their use of the British Empire as a model for the creation of the League of Nations. The purpose of this chapter is to show the way in which, from the creation of the League down to the late 1920s, the imperialist-internationalists saw the Commonwealth and the League as complementary to each other (i.e. rather than as two competing international organisations). It will be demonstrated that Zimmern, in particular, saw the League of Nations as an institution whose very existence would help secure the future of the British Commonwealth, which he feared was in danger of breaking apart without the superstructure of the League to support it. Just as the imperialist-internationalists had seen the Empire as a model for the League, so they saw the Commonwealth as a model for the ongoing development of the League, thus ensuring, in their minds, that the future relationship between Commonwealth and League would be one of mutually beneficial interchange of experience and example.

In order to allow the reader to make sense of the arguments of the imperialist-internationalists, this chapter presents a somewhat fuller historical introduction to the constitutional development of the Empire/Commonwealth in the 1920s as well as examining some of the main issues of debate in regards to intra-imperial relations and the role of the Commonwealth in the League of Nations.

6.1 The Development of the British Commonwealth in the 1920s

The decision of the imperialist-internationalists to begin using the term Empire rather than Commonwealth was explored in Chapter 4, but that development was only the beginning of a complex story. It is a story that in a way continues to this very day, given the continued existence of the Commonwealth of Nations, long after the colonies became independent and the former Dominions stopped using that name. It is not within the scope of this thesis to track the development of the Commonwealth story up to the present, but to understand the first major developments it is necessary to look at the Imperial Conferences in the 1920s.

It will be remembered that Duncan Hall's 1920 book *British Commonwealth of Nations* looked forward to the next planned Imperial Conference as a time to define the relationship between Britain and the Dominions, given that the Dominions had matured to the point of signing the Peace Treaty individually and obtaining their own seats in the League of Nations. These developments represented a major turning point in the international recognition of their independence. For the same reason, it was also a massive conundrum: How could the Dominions remain part of the British Empire or Commonwealth and simultaneously be independent even in matters of war and peace?

Among imperialists of all shades, there was a strong and determined wish to avoid a repetition of the events that led up to the Declaration of American Independence. This, as previously examined, was a main reason prompting London to allow the Dominions gradually increasing control over their own affairs. Yet it was becoming clear by the early 1920s that even if this approach prevented a new war of independence, it might simply turn out to dissolve the Empire in a more peaceful way, which, while vastly preferable to a war, was certainly not what any of the imperialists

desired. Thus, an overriding question loomed for the Imperial Conferences which took place in 1921, 1923, and 1926: what was the Commonwealth if its constituent members were fully self-governing?

To answer that question from the perspective of the time, three main sources are used here. The leading constitutional authority during this period was Arthur Berriedale Keith, born (like Zimmern) in 1879, who was a notable scholar of law and Sanskrit. He had obtained a first-class degree at Oxford in Classics, and subsequently set a new record of excellence when he took the Indian Civil Service examinations. Keith had a curious dual career, entering the Colonial Office in 1901, first working with colonial affairs, and then from 1907 to 1914 with affairs relating to the Dominions. During that period, Keith assisted at the Imperial Conferences. In 1914 he took up a professorship of Sanskrit at Edinburgh University, which he held for life, but he continued his interest in imperial affairs, in 1927 adding the post of lecturer in the constitution of the British Empire to his portfolio.⁴⁹⁹ His numerous publications on the British constitution were generally considered authoritative in Britain at the time, though the private correspondence of some Dominion administrators shows a certain irritation at Professor Keith pontificating from Edinburgh about imperial issues without ever actually visiting the Dominions and experiencing the realities facing the administrations.

A much younger commentator was Kenneth Wheare, a specialist on the development of the British constitution, who was born in Australia before being educated at Oxford where he later taught. Wheare wrote a number of key works on the development of the relationship between Britain and the Dominions from the 1926 Imperial

⁴⁹⁹ 'Keith, Arthur Berriedale (1879–1944)', *DNB*.

Conference onwards. In the 1930s, his main works were *The Statute of Westminster* and *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status*, which investigated the implications of the recent developments.⁵⁰⁰

And, finally, the third of the authorities used here is Duncan Hall himself, who wrote several follow up works to his 1920 book. An article also named 'The British Commonwealth of Nations' was published in 1927 in collaboration with Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University, and discussed the recent Balfour Report and the previous Imperial Conferences. Another work was his 1000 pages final *opus magnum*, published fifty one years after *The Commonwealth of Nations*, and simply called *Commonwealth*.⁵⁰¹ When using *Commonwealth* as a source, it should be remembered that, unlike Hall's early works, which were written at the same time as the developments discussed in this thesis, *Commonwealth* represented a kind of swansong published at the end of a long career during which the Empire had largely disappeared, to be replaced by a version of the Commonwealth distinctly unlike Hall's own idealistic writings of 1920. *Commonwealth*, unlike Hall's earlier works, was thus not so much a primary source for his ideas of the 1920s but rather the reflections of an old man evaluating the project that had been his focus of interest for his entire professional life.

-The Imperial Conferences of 1921 and 1923 and Dominion participation negotiations-

⁵⁰⁰ K. Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster* (Clarendon Press, 1933). K. Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status* (Oxford University Press, 1938, 4th ed. 1949).

⁵⁰¹ A.L. Lowell & H.D. Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations' in *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. X, No. 6* (World Peace Foundation, 1927), pp. 573-693. H. Duncan Hall, *Commonwealth* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971).

According to Hall's article from 1927, the principal work of the Imperial Conference of 1921 was a thorough overhaul of whether "the foreign policy of the British Empire was to be a unitary foreign policy." The answer to this question depended on a set of practical questions: should all policies be announced through the Foreign Office in London?; could the Dominions negotiate their own treaties?; and finally and not least, "what was the effect of membership of the League of Nations upon the relationship *inter se* of the parts of the British Commonwealth?"⁵⁰² These were big questions, but as Hall, Keith and Wheare all made clear, the 1921 Conference was not yet ready to formulate a real answer to them. The official statement of the Conference essentially declared that as things were working well on the basis of good communication between Britain and the Dominions they should continue that way.⁵⁰³ While Smuts had come to the Conference hoping for a definite constitutional declaration of the relationship between Britain and the Dominions, Billy Hughes from Australia was more interested in making Imperial unity in international affairs clear to the world. At the 1921 Conference, Hughes had the stronger hand. According to Lloyd George, in a speech given later that year, the British Foreign Office was "the instrument of the foreign policy of the Empire [...] That has been accepted by all the Dominions as inevitable. But they claim a voice in determining the lines of our policy."⁵⁰⁴ These rather vague concessions of the right of the Dominions to be involved in deciding Imperial foreign policy fell well short of granting them any real political

⁵⁰² Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', p. 598.

⁵⁰³ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', pp. 598-599; A.B. Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions* (Macmillan, 1929), pp. 4-5; Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status*, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁰⁴ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', p. 600. Hall is quoting a speech he describes as been given in December 1921 on the Irish settlement.

independence in foreign affairs. It was in any case only likely to be accepted for a short time given the ambitions of Canada and South Africa.

The early 1920s saw many challenges to this general agreement. Later in 1921 Lloyd George accepted an invitation to the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments that made no reference to the Dominions. Lloyd George argued that it had been agreed that "His Majesty's Government should represent the whole Empire at Washington" and only asked for some members of the delegation with "special knowledge of Dominion and Indian points of view". Smuts, however, protested that the precedent from the Paris Peace Conference should be followed (which Lloyd George conceded).⁵⁰⁵ Canada, meanwhile, increasingly wanted its own independent representation and negotiating power in regards to its southern neighbour (ie the United States). One of the early tests of this came in the negotiations of the Halibut Treaty of 1923 about the distribution of fishing rights between the United States and Canada. In what became a landmark precedent, Canada insisted that the treaty should, on the side of the Empire, be signed by a Canadian representative only on behalf of the Canadian Government – though fully accredited by the King – rather than being co-signed by a representative of the Imperial Government. By insisting on the right of the Dominions to sign international treaties in their own right, as long as they pertained only to them, Canada moved the principles of Dominion independence a step further.⁵⁰⁶ According to Hall, the consequence was that,

Treaties, either political or commercial, may be negotiated, signed and ratified separately by the different Governments of the British Commonwealth. In view of this

⁵⁰⁵ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', p. 601. First quote is Hall quoting Lloyd George. Second quote is pure Hall.

⁵⁰⁶ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', pp. 605-607. Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, pp. 370-374.

resolution and the event leading up to it, the theory current in 1921 of a unitary "foreign policy of the British Empire" was no longer tenable.⁵⁰⁷

In spite of these developments, though, there is no doubt that the Foreign Office continued to aim at British control over foreign relations, including relations between Canada and the United States. Hall's archives contain the copy of a note dated 11 July 1927 by Sir William Tyrrell, then Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, addressed to the Secretary of State (Austen Chamberlain), in which he argued that "we [the Foreign Office] must endeavour to retain as much control as we can get over American-Canadian relations in view of the possible repercussions on our relations with the United States."⁵⁰⁸

The issue of authority in international negotiations continued to raise its head as supplementary treaties were made to the Treaty of Versailles. The Lausanne Conference to settle peace with Turkey saw the British government agree to the British Empire being represented by a single delegation of two delegates, and no separate representation of the Dominions, without consulting the Dominions first. This caused offence in Canada, as it broke with the precedence of the Paris Peace Conference, and it required significant debate back and forth across the Atlantic to reach an agreement on how Canada would approach the result of the Conference.⁵⁰⁹ According to Keith, the ultimate result of the Lausanne Conference, from a constitutional point of view, was to set the precedence that "the power of the British Government to bind the Dominions was thus recognised contemporaneously with its duty not to impose on the any obligations, save with their consent"⁵¹⁰, a conclusion

⁵⁰⁷ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', p. 608.

⁵⁰⁸ H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34). Letter by Sir William Tyrrell, 11 July 1927.

⁵⁰⁹ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', pp. 609-611. Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, pp. 390-396.

⁵¹⁰ Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, p. 394.

that clearly described an uncomfortable starting point for international negotiations.

The natural conclusion to this understanding came with the Locarno Pact, when Great Britain signed on behalf of the Empire, but with a special clause, that "The present treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British Dominions, or upon India, unless the Government of each Dominion, or of India signifies its acceptance thereof."⁵¹¹

In the between the Lausanne and the Locarno Conferences came a second Imperial Conference in 1923, dubbed "the Unknown Imperial Conference" by Hall in 1971,⁵¹² at which, once again with only moderate success, there was an effort to define which powers of negotiation the different members of the Empire had. The conclusion of the conference was that on issues that were only relevant to a single Dominion or Great Britain alone, then that Dominion or Britain could sign and ratify a treaty on their own, as long as they consulted their colleagues beforehand to ensure that they were really the only part of the Empire affected.⁵¹³ It should be noted that Hall was consistent in arguing that the developments in the early 1920s formed part of a steady progression towards new rights in treaty negotiations for the Dominions, while Keith tended to argue that each of these steps was in more or less perfect accordance to established precedent, and therefore did not reflect any revolutionary changes in the character of the British Constitution.

In summary, the first half of the 1920s saw the Empire/Commonwealth faced with a string of challenges to define which powers of foreign policy belonged where, and the

⁵¹¹ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', pp. 611-12. Hall is quoting article IX of the Locarno treaty. The same quote, though without reference to the exact article, is given by Keith in his discussion of Locarno, Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, pp. 399.

⁵¹² Hall, *Commonwealth*, p. 510. "The Unknown Imperial Conference" is the title of a subchapter.

⁵¹³ Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', pp. 607-609. Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, pp. 374-375.

two Imperial Conferences held in the period managed only partially to give an answer to the problem. The 1921 Conference seemed to have overestimated the unity of the foreign policy of the different parts of the Commonwealth, while the 1923 Conference acknowledged the right of the Dominions to independent negotiations, without making very clear what then held together the Commonwealth. That the international community was confused about the relationships within the British Empire was hardly unreasonable, considering that the members of the Empire/Commonwealth had no clear agreement between themselves. Thus the grounds were laid for yet another Imperial Conference in 1926, to try once and for all to clearly formulate the status of the Dominions.

-The Imperial Conference of 1926, the Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster-

The Imperial Conference of 1926 was charged with sorting out the confusion, as far as possible, and defining what the relationship between Britain and the Dominions really was. In all the fluid developments of rights of representation and treaty making, no step in constitutional law had yet been taken to make clear that the Dominions were anything other than colonies with a fancy name, with the result that the temporary permission given to Dominion governments to play an international role could in theory be revoked without any changes in legislation. The Dominions might have been allowed to act independently, but, constitutionally, there was nothing to guarantee it as a right.

The more British settler-Dominions of Australia and New Zealand were largely satisfied with that status quo and, in the words of Zimmern, when faced with questions of constitutional practice tended not to ask "Why?" but "Why not?", on the

premise that practice worked.⁵¹⁴ The South African government, on the other hand, sought a clearer statement of the country's status as an essentially independent part of the British Commonwealth. As long as Smuts had been in power, the South African government was reluctantly willing to concede to the vaguer formulations produced by the previous Imperial Conferences. After Smuts was ousted from power in 1924, the 1926 Conference had to work with the Boer nationalist Hertzog, who was not willing to accept general statements of intent. He came to the Conference to get the "constitutional declaration" that Smuts had failed to achieve, while Canada's Mackenzie King similarly wanted the independence of Canada clarified to the world.⁵¹⁵

Hertzog's call followed upon that of his South African competitor, Smuts, who had submitted a document to the 1921 Conference on "Constitutional Relations in the Empire" with two different variations (A and B). Both versions started with the same formulation of point 1:

The British Empire rests on a basis of equal partnership between the United Kingdom and the Dominions, including India. Their Governments are all equal and co-ordinate governments of H.M. the King, united by a common bond of allegiance to this Throne, and by common ideals of freedom, equality and justice. They are agreed that all surviving forms of inequality and subordination shall disappear, and that the necessary legislative and administrative alterations to that end shall be effected.

⁵¹⁴ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 280.

⁵¹⁵ Hertzog's call for a "constitutional declaration" is quoted in Hall, 'The British Commonwealth of Nations', p. 614. For a longer, fairly contemporary analysis of the 1926 Conference, its actors and impact, see Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status*, pp. 21-61.

While their Parliaments have full and exclusive authority over their internal affairs and have full international status, the principles of their common foreign policy are settled by mutual consultation and conference.⁵¹⁶

Yet by the first line of point 2 there were variations between versions A and B, after which differences in formulations were common, suggesting that Smuts was particularly keen on the specific wording of point 1 quoted above. This document, along with a longer memorandum entitled "The Constitution of the British Commonwealth", was circulated by the British Prime Minister Baldwin to the Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain and Lord Balfour (former Prime Minister and titular head of the Conference).⁵¹⁷ Smuts' memorandum was thirteen pages long, and contained a fairly detailed analysis of his considerations on "1. The status of the Dominions, 2. The relations of the King, as the common bond of unity, to the component parts of the Commonwealth, 3. The methods of conference and consultation between those parts in all matters of common Imperial concern, and 4. Several other subsidiary but still important matters."⁵¹⁸

Baldwin, in his accompanying letter to Chamberlain, pointed out that most of the memorandum had not been used at the Imperial Conference in 1921, though Smuts had used its preliminary comments in his own speech, while part of section B of Smuts' "Constitutional Relations" draft had been "embodied in the published record

⁵¹⁶ Smuts, "Constitutional Relations in the Empire" (Imperial Conference 1921), document located in H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34). Already the first line of point 2 varies in version A and B, after which differences in formulations are common throughout, suggesting that Smuts was particularly keen of the formulation of the first point.

⁵¹⁷ H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34). A cover letter from Baldwin to Chamberlain is dated October 1926 (the Conference started 19 October) and is stamped, probably for archival purposes, as 3 November 1926. The letter refers to both the longer memorandum, and the draft mentioned above, attributing them to Smuts, and dating them to the Imperial Conference of 1921. It is mentioned at the end of the letter, that Balfour was receiving a copy of the letter and its contents.

⁵¹⁸ Smuts, "The Constitution of the British Commonwealth" in H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34).

of the 1921 proceedings". His comments seem to suggest that the Prime Minister still found the old documents of value, and he pointed out that he remained committed to "the indissoluble unity of all parts of the Empire under King and Crown, and the reference to the Crown as an integral part in the constitutional framework of each political entity."⁵¹⁹ It is worth noting that in regards to the topic of executive sovereignty Smuts, in the longer memorandum, referred to Duncan Hall's 1920 *British Commonwealth of Nations* and its suggestion of a declaration of constitutional rights, stating that "I heartily endorse Hall's suggestion which seems to me the easiest constitutional means of settling the international status of the Dominions without changing the unwritten flexible character of the Constitution of the British Commonwealth".⁵²⁰

The result of the Conference was the so-called Balfour Report. The complete report covered the issues of "The Status of Great Britain and the Dominions", "The Special Position of India", and "The Relations between the various parts of the British Empire", which included the title of the King, the position of the Governors-General, the operation of Dominion legislation, and appeal to the Privy Council.⁵²¹ A general overlap of topics and considerations with Smuts' memorandum is noticeable, and the best known part, the oft-quoted attempt at a short formulation on Dominion status and relation with Britain, bears distinct similarities to Smuts' 1921 draft:

They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs,

⁵¹⁹ "Baldwin to Chamberlain Oct. 1921", H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34).

⁵²⁰ Smuts, "The Constitution of the British Commonwealth" in H. Duncan Hall Papers, NLA, MS 5547 (box 34), pp. 6-7 (original typed pagination), quote p. 7.

⁵²¹ The complete report is printed in A.B. Keith (ed.), *Speeches and Documents of the British Dominions 1918-1931. From Self-Government to National Sovereignty* (Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 161-170.

though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.⁵²²

A striking difference to Smuts' "Declaration" is that there is no mention, either in this central part, or later in the report, of the Dominions having "full international status", as Smuts had written. Arguably, as the questions of Dominion representation at the various conferences had shown, the acceptance of their "full international status" was something Britain could not grant on its own, but which had to be accepted and acknowledged by the wider international community.

Besides, while those lines made clear that Britain and the Dominions were equal and that Britain had no right of overruling the Dominions in domestic or foreign affairs, it still didn't answer what the Commonwealth really was, whether it was called the British Empire or the British Commonwealth of Nations. Nor did it change the legislation that required the British Parliament to ratify changes in the constitutions of the Dominions. As Sir William Tyrrell's note from 1927 showed, the Foreign Office was still doing its best to keep central control. Actual legal changes were to require another Imperial Conference in 1930, and the subsequent 1931 Statute of Westminster, which finally removed the right of the British Parliament to interfere in Dominion legislation.⁵²³ Even that, though, hardly changed the mind-set of the Foreign Office. In 1942, E.H. Carr, who had of course served in the Foreign Office

⁵²² Keith (ed.), *Speeches and Documents of the British Dominions 1918-1931*, p. 161.

A full analysis of the evolution of the Balfour Report as negotiated through a string of drafts by different authors can be found in, Hall, *Commonwealth*, pp 607-641, which particularly emphasises the contributions by Hertzog.

⁵²³ For general contemporary debates on the interpretation of the Balfour Report, see Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, and Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status*. It is worth noting that while Canada and South Africa immediately ratified the Statute of Westminster of 1931, both Australia and New Zealand held on for more than a decade, before the ratified the Statute that confirmed their own independence.

from 1916-1936, wrote that "almost everywhere a strong British lead will be welcomed, not resented, by the other English-speaking countries".⁵²⁴

-The Status of the Dominions and the "league within the League"-

A significant reason why it was so important to clarify the status of the Dominions was its impact on their place in the international community. Were the Dominions independent sovereign states? Were they glorified colonies? Or were they something akin to the federal states of America? The answer was as seen above clearly crucial to negotiations of international treaties.

A serious issue was the uncertainty about what a "British Empire" signature on a treaty actually meant. Did the signature commit the entire British Empire to support the treaty or only Britain and its colonies?—Cecil considered this specific conundrum in some comments to a draft League of Nations Convention dated 31 January 1919, concluding that "it seems altogether impracticable [!] that the Dominions should seek not to be bound by international action of Imperial Govt."⁵²⁵ Though, of course, that was exactly what happened. And what was the standing of a treaty signed by a Dominion alone? Would it be valid if challenged by the British government at a later stage? The other side of the issue was the impact of separate Dominion representation on international agreements. The United States had used the multiple representation of the British Empire in the League of Nations as a reason not to join unless the United States was granted one delegation per state. France objected to Dominion representation at the Lausanne Conference, unless their own colonies of Algeria, West

⁵²⁴ E.H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace* (Macmillan, 1942), p. 186. Carr's somewhat optimistic assumption of the wish for British leadership included the United States, which he acknowledged as economically and militarily superior to the British Empire, but still assumed appreciated a guiding hand from Britain in the big international affairs.

⁵²⁵ FO 698/243 f. 5.

Africa, and Tunisia were similarly granted representation, even though the French colonies had no comparable level of independence to the Dominions.⁵²⁶ These examples demonstrate the unwillingness of the international community to give the British Empire an unfair advantage within the League by effectively 'stuffing the ballot' with the extra votes of the Dominion delegations, not least since France and the United States did not yet see the Dominions as independent states with "full international status".

It can certainly be argued that the British Empire wanted to have its cake and eat it in international affairs. In 1920, with the Peace negotiations fresh in mind, the Foreign Office was concerned about the status of the Empire and its reception internationally in connection with preparing credentials for the Dominion Delegates to the League of Nations: "It raises the everlasting question of the anomalous position of the British Empire in the League of Nations. Are they separate Members? Are they part of the British Empire? Is the British Empire one? Is the British Empire six?"⁵²⁷ However, as the Dominions became a fixed part of the League there was a clear expectation in London that the international community should accept the Dominions as independent sovereign states, while at the same time seeking to ensure that members of the Commonwealth should agree on a unitary foreign policy on all issues of common interest, to be advanced at the League and in other settings by acting as a block of collaborating countries rather than as a centrally controlled Empire. According to Gilbert Murray, writing in 1929, the one reasonable exception to jurisdiction from international settlement that the Empire should insist on was disputes between members of the Empire since

⁵²⁶ Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, p. 390.

⁵²⁷ FO 371/5479, f. 3. Document signed Cecil Hurst, 3-4 November 1920.

Great Britain regards disputes between different parts of the Empire as domestic and not international. This exclusion is justified both in theory and in practice. A dispute between, say, England and Australia, is clearly domestic to the British Commonwealth and ought to be decided in accordance with British ideas and British customs. To hand it over to the International Court, to be decided according to the Court's view of international law, would be to give a semi-foreign tribunal the right of determining the constitution of the British Empire.⁵²⁸

But if disputes in the Empire were domestic matters then how could its members be seen as independent by the international community?

The idea that members of the British Commonwealth could be simultaneously independent while fully collaborating was often formulated as the idea of the Commonwealth being "a league within the League" – that is a group of independent but closely aligned nations, that was essentially no different from any other group of similar minded countries agreeing to coordinate their vote in the League of Nations to secure the outcomes they wanted. The idea was internationally controversial, as opinions were divided on whether any "leagues within the League" were acceptable at all. On the one hand it was argued that block-voting would destroy the entire purpose of the League by diminishing its capability of functioning as a forum for open communication and reconciliation of differences, since the kind of intrigue and bargaining that would take place within mini-leagues would not adhere to the principles of openness and transparency that was part of the ideology behind the League. On the other hand, proponents of "leagues within the League" argued that it would be hard to secure real and significant agreements on matters of global importance without an opportunity to secure the kind of private agreement between

⁵²⁸ Gilbert Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation* (Allen & Unwin, 1929), p. 145.

governments needed to stop a descent into endless quarrelling voices. People like Amery suggested actively encouraging the smaller countries to band together in mini-leagues of similar minded countries, so they would be able to present a united front with the weight of their collected populations and economies behind them, effectively leading to a smaller number of groups of nations whose representatives could meet in a manageable forum that was more likely to reach a large scale agreement.⁵²⁹ In this context, the Dominions were often compared to small European countries such as Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands – countries that had an international presence but were individually too small to be powerful.⁵³⁰

The following pages will show how the debate about the role of the Empire/Commonwealth in the League of Nations, and whether it should function (officially or *de facto*) as a “league within the League”, was a major aspect of the thoughts of the imperialist-internationalists about the ongoing development of Empire and League in the 1920s. In many ways, the concept of a “league within the League” appears to be an attempt of merging aspects of Old and New Diplomacy. For the British Empire and Commonwealth to act like a “league within the League” would allow it to continue as a significant player in the game of the great powers, while Dominion membership of the League allowed all self-governing parts of the Commonwealth to become active participants in the New Diplomacy on international scale.

⁵²⁹ Amery, 'The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea'.

⁵³⁰ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, pp. 351-357, describes the issue.

6.2 The League and the Commonwealth

- Representation of South Africa in the League Assembly 1920-1923-

Some of the principle issues connected to Dominion representation in the League have already been raised, but the issues of the practice of Dominion representation quickly came to the fore when the representatives for the first Assembly were chosen.

Smuts and Cecil had been in close cooperation as the two leading voices of the British Empire in writing of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and when it was time to choose the representatives of South Africa for the first League Assembly, Smuts considered Cecil's presence at the Assembly essential. From the perspective that the Empire was all one big happy family, the appointment of Cecil might seem no more controversial than Smuts' own appointment to the War Cabinet, but coming on the heels of a major struggle to make international society accept that the Dominions were independent entities, entitled to independent representation, the concept was rather more controversial.

That Smuts himself was influential in the League was clear. In December 1919 he managed, on request, to get copies of the drafts agendas for the Council and Assembly before they had been circulated even to all appointed members of the Council—of which Smuts himself would not be a member—and the cover letter pointed out that “General Smuts is the only person to whom they have been sent outside the Secretariat” and stressed the importance of them being treated as highly confidential.⁵³¹ Smuts was therefore well prepared, and wanted to secure the strongest possible support for his vision for the League.

⁵³¹ League of Nations Archive, R1573/40/2315. Copy of letter sent to Captain Lane for the information of Gen Smuts, 5 December 1919

Choosing Cecil as the second representative of South Africa at the first Assembly of the League of Nations was a calculated choice, as Smuts argued that “I am very anxious that the League should have the benefit of Cecil's advice from a larger point of view”,⁵³² but one that turned out to be highly controversial compared to the foreign policies of the Empire. Foreign Office documents from 27 October shows the concern of Balfour and others that the appointment of Cecil would strengthen American prejudice against Dominion representation in the League and the accusation of multiple representation for the British Empire. Notes to the telegram, dated 28 October 1920, argues that, “the whole theory of independent Dominion representation in the League of Nations rests on the ground that the problems coming up the League require to be voiced by the Dominions from the angle of their own special interests insofar as they may not be identical with those of the British home government”, and concludes that representation of a Dominion by a British statesman with no connection to the Dominion renders the argument for Dominion representation obsolete.⁵³³ Since Cecil was chosen for being Cecil, rather than for any deeper understanding of South African issues, the concern was understandable, and in Cecil's diary from the Assembly, an entry from 13 November—two days before the opening of the Assembly and after he had arrived in Geneva—shows that a dinner with Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary General of the League, revealed that Drummond was still not convinced of Cecil's right to represent South Africa, though Cecil thought the antagonism was all caused by Frenchmen wanting to avoid the presence of anybody who supported the entry of Germany into the League. In what is probably understated

⁵³² FO 371/5479 f. 8, Typed paraphrased telegram, Government of South Africa to the Colonial Office, 24 October 1920.

⁵³³ FO 371/5478 ff. 197-199. Telegram, notes to telegram, and paraphrase of telegram, R. Graham, A. Balfour et al., 27-28 October 1920. Quote from notes f. 197.

language Cecil admitted that "we very nearly quarrelled".⁵³⁴ It is clear that Cecil did not recognise, or at least accept, the fundamental objection to his work as a representative of South Africa.

In spite of the concerns of the Foreign Office, the British legate to Switzerland, Theo Russell, reported favourably back on Cecil's participation. In a letter to Lord Curzon dated 23 November 1920, Russell gave his personal impressions of the Assembly stating that the press ("these birds of evil omen") had expected the Assembly to last no more than two days, but that Cecil had turned the fortunes of the Assembly around:

I have no hesitation in saying that by far the greatest share in the process of galvanating the League into a living, palpitating body has been borne by the second delegate for South Africa, Lord Robert Cecil. Not only his speeches from the tribune, but his personality, his earnestness and his persuasive intercourse with other delegates, have contributed more than anything else to dissipate a spirit of scoffing and to create an atmosphere of determination on the part of the League.⁵³⁵

Nevertheless, the concerns about the American reaction was hardly unfounded. In a letter dated 13 December from Colonel House, with whom Cecil had collaborated closely in Paris, House congratulated Cecil on his participation in the Assembly but urged him not to come to the USA to speak about the League in spite of invitations to do so, as "much has been said about the League being of British origin and your visit would lend color to this statement."⁵³⁶ While Cecil's part in writing the Covenant was presumably a main reason for the hesitation, his recent role as a representative of one of the Dominions undoubtedly strengthened the reservations.

⁵³⁴ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51131, f. 104. Cecil's diary from the Assembly, 13 November 1920.

⁵³⁵ FO 371/5479 f. 121. Letter from Theo Russell to Lord Curzon, 23 November 1920.

⁵³⁶ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51095, ff. 5-6, quote f. 6.

Regardless of the British concerns, the choice of Cecil had been success as far as Smuts was concerned. Friendly correspondence between Cecil and Smuts from December 1920 to July 1922 confirms Smuts' satisfaction in Cecil's participation and he re-nominated Cecil as representative of South Africa in 1921 and 1922, in spite the occasional acknowledgement that his position might not be popular with the British government.⁵³⁷ By 1923 Cecil had joined the Cabinet and went to Geneva on behalf of the British Empire,⁵³⁸ but in line with his wish to strengthen the League more than South Africa itself, Smuts appointed Gilbert Murray—the close collaborator of Cecil in the League of Nations Union—as the new representative of South Africa.

- *Zimmern on the League as a Deus ex Machina* -

For Zimmern, the challenges to cohesion of the Commonwealth raised by the development of Dominion status were real and difficult to resolve. In various forms, it was an issue he repeatedly addressed in the 1920s via a string of speeches and articles, many of which were published together in *The Prospects of Democracy* in 1929.⁵³⁹ The Balfour Report had declared the independence, more or less, of the governments of the Dominions, but having removed the central government from the core of the organisation, what had been left to tie together the members of the Commonwealth was defined as “a common allegiance to the Crown”.

For Keith, when writing his 1928 book *Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, the formulation was a cause of great tribulation, because if taken at face value it implied the dissolution of the Empire into a personal union, in which the King was King of Australia as a separate function from being King of Canada, which was in turn in a

⁵³⁷ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51076, ff. 94-111. Correspondence between Cecil and Smuts.

⁵³⁸ Cecil of Chelwood Papers, Add MS 51076, ff. 115-116. Correspondence between Cecil and Smuts 6 and 9 June 1923.

⁵³⁹ Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy*.

separate function from being King of New Zealand, and so on. The result was that no treaty signed by the King simply on the authority of the government of Great Britain would have any relevance to any of his other Kingdoms. However, Keith argued that the dissolution of the Crown had not been supported by any legislation, nor had it been discussed in those terms by Britain and the Dominions, which implied that the dissolution of the Crown had not in fact taken place and that the Balfour Report had been mis-formulated. The Crown remained one and indivisible, and gave shape and form to the Empire, which was the basis for the status of its representatives in international negotiations whether they came from Britain or the Dominions.⁵⁴⁰

Zimmern, up to a point, agreed with Keith. In *The Third British Empire*, he argued that “it is evident, that the Crown which acts on the advice of a South African minister is only in name the same Crown as that which acts on the advice of a British, Irish, or Canadian minister” —which is exactly the point Keith made against the Balfour Declaration. But where Keith concluded that the Declaration was mistaken, Zimmern continued the argument by stating that, “the Crown, in fact, under the post-war constitution, can receive discordant advice from six separate Prime Ministers. It could even receive the advice to go to war with itself.” In short, the Crown “has no binding force at all, it is merely a façade”, and “behind the comfortable theory of the Crown as a constitutional link is an unresolved constitutional deadlock.”⁵⁴¹ Where Keith saw the consequences of the Declaration and therefore rejected it, Zimmern saw the same consequences and looked for a new solution, readily accepting:

The old constitution, as far as it is still in working order, is powerless to arrest the process of transformation which we have already observed. The Empire is, in fact,

⁵⁴⁰ Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions*, pp. 418-435.

⁵⁴¹ All quotes from Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 49.

constitutionally speaking, in rapid disintegration. It is drifting steadily towards a condition, if it has not already reached it, in which it is no longer a single state but an entente of states.⁵⁴²

Based on this reality, the task for the Commonwealth was to remain an organisation of collaboration in areas of common interests, and to that end Zimmern considered the League of Nations would support rather than hamper the Commonwealth.

A key issue for Zimmern was the need of the British Empire for universal peace:

The British Empire needs peace everywhere and all the time. It needs a general guarantee of peace as such, irrespective of the geographical and other conditions. It is of small value to those who wish to keep the people of Canada and Australia thinking along the same lines of general policy as the people of Great Britain, to build up an ingenious system of local pacts by which one part of the Empire is defended in this way and another in that way. The British Empire lives by the ocean. The ocean is one and indivisible. The arrangements for the safeguarding of peace should be equally one and indivisible. Thus it may be regarded as certain, despite the rejection of the Geneva Protocol in March 1925, that British public opinion will eventually adopt a universal, rather than a regional, plan for the maintenance of peace. Such a plan is, of course, a world interest but it is also pre-eminently a British interest.⁵⁴³

Without universal peace, pretty much any conflict was bound to affect some part of the Empire, and thus a universal institution such as the League of Nations, designed to secure peace, was in the interest of the Empire. Along similar lines, Murray argued in 1929 that "if war should break out anywhere from one of these causes [racial,

⁵⁴² Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 50.

⁵⁴³ Alfred Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 300. Similar sentiments were expressed in Zimmern, 'The Prospects of Democracy', p. 362, a talk given in 1927. In the talk, he stressed that world peace was even more important to the British Empire than to the smaller states, because of the Empire's universal interests.

religious], it is the British Empire that would be struck first."⁵⁴⁴ Furthermore, Murray thought that "another war would probably be the end of the Empire",⁵⁴⁵ making the need for universal peace absolute.

Hall, too, had pointed to the motive of self-interest at a 1927 round table debate at the University of Chicago, where he stated that,

there is a very strong movement throughout the British Commonwealth in support of the League of Nations. [...] Just why we support the League of Nations, when you come down to the real explanation, is hard to say. It is a mixture of motives. We are more interested than any country in the world in the preservation of the status quo, as we have got everything to lose by a disturbance of peace.⁵⁴⁶

However, as Zimmern had pointed out in a 1924 article, if the League eventually managed to secure universal peace, it could also mean the end of the Empire since "an Empire held together by fear of attack is an Empire which will fall to pieces when the League of Nations can effectively relieve it from this fear".⁵⁴⁷ His words offered a clear warning that the Empire needed to offer its members more than the security of *Pax Britannica* if it wanted to survive as a significant actor in a world of greater international cooperation.

In commerce, Zimmern's conclusion was the same:

Great Britain is not interested in the breaking down of economic barriers in this or that region. She is interested in the breaking down of economic barriers in every part of the world. Living as she does by foreign trade and dependent upon the ocean paths for her

⁵⁴⁴ Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation*, pp. 214-215.

⁵⁴⁵ Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation*, p. 215.

⁵⁴⁶ William Harrison Moore Collection, University of Melbourne Archives, 11/6/3/7: 'Duncan Hall, Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation, Fourth Institute –Problems of the British Empire, 30 June 1927'. Quote p. 107.

⁵⁴⁷ Zimmern, 'Education and International Goodwill' in Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy* (1929), p. 57. Paper based on Earl Grey Memorial Lecture, delivered April 26, 1924.

food and raw material, she is more dependent than any other state upon international economic co-operation. And such co-operation, as is now becoming very clear, can best be developed through the activities of the League of Nations.⁵⁴⁸

While politicians such as Amery were trying to promote Imperial Preference through the Empire Marketing Board, Zimmern supported a worldwide solution which required international cooperation, reflecting his preference for a League that had a large portfolio of interests beyond simply matters of war and peace.

Even in matters of race-relations, where Zimmern so often hailed the British Empire as offering a model of political equality, he still thought the League was essential to the future development of the Empire/Commonwealth. He feared that the clamour for national independence in the colonies would all too easily break into war, as the British and French Empires sought to move from "race-ascendency into a partnership", a task he believed had to happen whether they wanted it or not—and which he deemed impossible without the umbrella of international security offered by the League.⁵⁴⁹

But such claims about how much the British Empire needed the League could obviously suggest that the Empire itself might no longer be relevant. If the British Empire had helped to inspire the creation of the League of Nations in its image, but with a worldwide reach that allowed it to solve even those issues that were outside the reach of the Empire, had it not effectively set up its own superior successor and helped to make itself redundant? Zimmern acknowledged the issue, "If the Empire can only survive in and through the League, is not the League taking the place of the

⁵⁴⁸ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', pp. 300-301.

⁵⁴⁹ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 302.

Empire, as the Council and the Assembly and the League's technical Committees are taking the place of the Imperial Conference?"⁵⁵⁰

According to Hall:

The general tendency in the world is toward international cooperation, and the general tendency of the members of the British Commonwealth will be even more toward increasing cooperation with each other. We are being drawn together day by day by the tightening bond of communication: the common factors of blood, language, and basic ideals may tend in the future to count for far more than in the past because of these developments in communication.⁵⁵¹

In other words, cooperating in the League ought only to strengthen the Commonwealth where there were more common bonds to start with. Zimmern likewise argued that the League served a function that helped keep the unity of the Commonwealth when mere statements about the bonds of the Crown might fail. While the interests of the Empire were better served through the League of Nations, it did not follow that the needs of the individual members of the Commonwealth would be better served by the League should the Commonwealth not exist. At the most basic level, the League helped promote the bonds of the Commonwealth by reminding the members of the Commonwealth of all they had in common:

It does not take a very profound knowledge of psychology to realise that the British members of the League of Nations feel more British in Geneva than they do in London. The psychological effect of an Imperial Conference, where British delegations from five continents are, for the most part, discussing matters on which their local interests are divided, is necessarily quite different from that of Geneva,

⁵⁵⁰ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 303.

⁵⁵¹ William Harrison Moore Collection, University of Melbourne Archives, 11/6/3/7: 'Duncan Hall, Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation, Fourth Institute –Problems of the British Empire, 30 June 1927'. Quote on p. 92.

where the British delegates are drawn naturally together in the face of foreign interests and, what is even more important, foreign habits of mind.⁵⁵²

Zimmern thought that this reminder of the cultural bonds of the British Commonwealth would help its members together and increase the awareness of the desirability of a united front in international affairs. It was seen in Chapter 4 that in Zimmern's chapter on Britain and the League of Nations in *The Third British Empire*, he spoke about the British Commonwealth as the British Entente, one among other regional ententes in the League⁵⁵³ He made it clear that what he meant was that for the Commonwealth "to survive, [it] must survive as a league within the larger League".⁵⁵⁴

But not only did the League have a psychological effect, it also had the very practical effect of keeping the members of the Commonwealth in closer communication.

Zimmern pointed out the value of proximity it offered, as the League Assembly met annually, unlike the Imperial Conferences that only met every four years, fostering more frequent personal contact.⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, by elevating a lot of issues up on the international level, where British common interests became more noticeable to the representatives of the Commonwealth countries, Zimmern concluded that "it must be said that the League helps the Empire by *specialising* its problems of detail and thus aiding towards their solution on more technical and non-controversial lines and by making its peoples more conscious of the larger problems on which they think and feel alike."⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵² Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 310.

⁵⁵³ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 50.

⁵⁵⁴ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 63.

⁵⁵⁵ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', p. 288.

⁵⁵⁶ Zimmern, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations', pp. 310-311.

The result, according to Zimmern, was that “the League of Nations is the *deus ex machina* of the British Commonwealth”,⁵⁵⁷ as it had “been found to be a more useful agency, even for imperial co-operation, than [the British Empire]. The Geneva League of Nations has, in fact, become an indispensable part of the system of the British Empire”, without which the very cohesion of the Empire would be in grave trouble.⁵⁵⁸ In 1926 he had asked, “Is this the end of the British Empire? Must we acquiesce in this euthanasia?” stemming from the independence of the Dominions.⁵⁵⁹ In 1928, he brought it up again and his answer was, “The League, in fact, presents for the Empire not a Euthanasia but a Koinonia”,⁵⁶⁰ using the Greek word for community.

- Symbiosis between League and Commonwealth -

It would be easy to conclude that Zimmern’s view of the League as an essential element for the survival of the Commonwealth suggested that the Commonwealth was no longer relevant to the League itself. Even if, as Zimmern argued, the interests of the members of the Commonwealth were better defended by their continued collaboration in the League, that would not seem to be of intrinsic value to the organisation of the League of Nations, raising the question of whether the Commonwealth was a parasite kept alive by an unwitting host.

However, while Zimmern emphasised the dependence of the Commonwealth on the League of Nations, he agreed with Hall that the Commonwealth had much to offer the League, allowing the two organisations to develop in symbiosis, mutually supporting each other and serving as both accelerator and guarantor of human development and

⁵⁵⁷ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, p. 63.

⁵⁵⁸ Zimmern, ‘Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations’, p. 299.

⁵⁵⁹ Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, pp. 42-62.

⁵⁶⁰ Zimmern, ‘Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations’, p. 311.

civilisation. At the most basic level, the imperialist-internationalists tended to see the Commonwealth as the linchpin of civilization. In the words of Murray,

European Civilization perhaps is the whole fleet that must be saved; but the British Commonwealth is at least one of its greatest vessels [...]. If European civilization goes, Great Britain goes; and if on the other hand Great Britain goes, it will be very difficult for European civilization to survive.⁵⁶¹

The League of Nations therefore needed the Commonwealth to secure the continued existence of the basic values that supported its own creation. All the reasons that made the British Empire a relevant model for the creation of the League of Nations continued to apply. For Zimmern, the British Commonwealth was more than a historical model for the League; it was also a living example to the League of how to organise cooperation between states, as well as the basic political conditions that were necessary to do so, in particular the presence and promotion of political democracy:

My only concern with it here is to bring out the vital connection between political democracy and the effective organization of peace. The British Commonwealth has made war inconceivable between its independent members without prejudice to their perfect freedom in every other respect. The moral and political development of the League of Nations can only be ensured on the same lines.⁵⁶²

By demonstrating in its daily running the benefits of cooperation and peace to the world, and the importance of encouraging the growth of democratic independence in former colonies, the Commonwealth was continuing to set a model for the world. While acknowledging, as he had, that the Empire needed the security of universal peace that the League would provide, Zimmern argued that it was still the case that in

⁵⁶¹ Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation*, p. 210.

⁵⁶² Zimmern, 'The Prospects of Democracy', p. 361.

the case of race relations “the League for its part needs the example and the moral authority afforded by the *Pax Britannica*”, citing, as in other articles, the case of the negotiation of a solution to the disagreement between South Africa and India on intra-imperial migration.⁵⁶³ But Zimmern’s argument went further than just race relations. It was, to a large degree, based on his sense of British exceptionalism as an essentially internationalist people. If the League was to succeed, it needed the Commonwealth:

And the lamp-bearers, the transmitters, the human agents through whom alone these new institutions of co-operation can function, where are we to look for them, or at least for their best exemplars, except in the country which has devised, in Dominion status, the world’s finest model on international co-operative institutions?⁵⁶⁴

The British Commonwealth was a beacon in a world where it was likely that “economic forces compelled the world to choose between international government and private tyranny and no alternative system was available”. In such circumstances:

A minority of responsible peoples, acting together in association, must preserve the inherited traditions of government and pass them on to the less experienced. That is the task of the League of Nations in the first period of its life; and that is the especial task of the peoples of the British Commonwealth, who bring to it their own unique experience of constitutional government and international co-operation.⁵⁶⁵

It was the practical experience of making democracy work and spreading it abroad (as Zimmern saw it—the real history of British colonial rule is hardly as simple or rosy as that), which gave the British a unique perspective and experience—things that the League needed in order to grow from an idea into a working international body. This

⁵⁶³ Zimmern, ‘Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations’, p. 302. Zimmern used the same example in A. Zimmern, ‘Some Principles and Problems of the Peace Conference’. Also, as used in previous chapter, in Zimmern, *Third British Empire*.

⁵⁶⁴ Zimmern, ‘The Prospects of Democracy’, pp. 368-369.

⁵⁶⁵ Zimmern, ‘The Prospects of Democracy’, p. 369.

experience and building up of best practices was in Zimmern's view expressed not only in the Covenant, but also in the way that "the authorities of the League, working no doubt quite independently of any preconceived scheme, have developed an organisation corresponding very closely, *mutatis mutandis*, to that then recommended for Great Britain."⁵⁶⁶

The ongoing example of Britain was of value, according to Murray writing in 1929, not only at the level of Commonwealth (i.e. Britain and the Dominions) but also at the level of Empire (i.e. Britain and the Colonies), where the largest remaining Empire on earth held great responsibilities in terms of leading by example the way forward:

The principle of Empire—that is, the government of alien territories or nations by a superior or stronger nation—fits with some difficulty into the scheme of the Covenant. The Mandate system imposes on Imperial Powers exactly the right degree and kind of control, but unfortunately it covers only a small part of the subject territories of the world. It shows, however, the right road, and a large part of the greatest problem of Great Britain's future will be on the way to solution as soon as some British Government takes the bold but eminently wise step of sending the annual reports of all its Crown Colonies and Protectorates to the League Mandates Commission, and thereby establishing the Mandate principle as the only true and accepted method for the government of the uncivilized peoples by the civilized.⁵⁶⁷

Murray was discussing here both his discomfort with imperialism in the sense of the rule of a dominant nation over another, which a page earlier he called "a shaken and unpopular principle",⁵⁶⁸ as well as the potential of the British Empire to lead the way in strengthening the authority of the League as the natural guarantor of the

⁵⁶⁶ Zimmern, 'The Prospects of Democracy', p. 343.

⁵⁶⁷ Murray, *The Ordeal of This Generation*, pp. 149-150.

⁵⁶⁸ Murray, *The Ordeal of This Generation*, p. 148.

management of ruled peoples everywhere. At a time when he still considered the populations of the colonies too immature to obtain full self-government, abolishing the Empire in favour of benevolent international supervision seemed to Murray a reasonable way forward. Since the Covenant did not for obvious reasons include clauses forcing its founding members to convert their colonies into mandates, a voluntary submission to international supervision seemed a logical solution. As Morefield shows in *Covenants without Swords*, Murray and Zimmern both placed faith in the value of public opinion, and believed that if Britain voluntarily submitted to the mandate system, then the rest of the colonial powers would gradually be pushed by the public to follow the same course of action.

Combining these lines of thought together, it is clear that Murray believed that the Commonwealth would in future continue to develop as a kind of torchbearer for the League, showing by its own internal dynamics the way forward for further international cooperation. Britain, by handing over control of the Empire to the League, would give up imperialism in favour of internationalism. The British Empire would essentially, and to Murray rightfully, be gone, and British Commonwealth and the League of Nations rise in its place as a more democratic and more moral way to secure international cooperation.

6.3 Conclusions

Neither the League of Nations nor the organisation of the new British Commonwealth was a finished deal after the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty in 1919 and the subsequent creation of the League of Nations. The following decade presented both organisations with the challenges of new claims and adjustments. The League and the Commonwealth in the eyes of the imperialist-internationalists existed in a kind of

symbiosis. The League could not survive without the support of the British Empire and Commonwealth, while they in turn were equally dependent on the League of Nations for securing the international stability needed to facilitate the continued development of the Commonwealth out of Empire. Without world peace, Zimmern, Murray, and Hall all agreed, the Empire would sooner or later face a war that would break the bonds of unity, whether based on interests of geography, race, or religion. Furthermore, meeting on a regular basis in Geneva to debate topics of international importance served to remind the delegations from different parts of the Commonwealth of how much they had in common compared with the rest of the world. Without the League, they believed, the Empire and Commonwealth would soon disintegrate through the forces of distance and self-interest.

All the same, Zimmern, Murray, and Hall also agreed that the League of Nations needed not only the support of the British Empire and Commonwealth, but also the moral compass of 'British' ideas that continued to be developed within the framework of the Commonwealth. Seeing the Commonwealth as a "league within the League" fostered the idea of the Commonwealth as an ongoing experiment in international collaboration and governance that would continue to offer new results and best practices that could be shared with the greater League to the benefit of all. In Zimmern and Murray's hope of careful tutelage of the colonies into independent members of the League of Nations, and Murray's idea of the Empire voluntarily handing over the right of supervision of the colonies, they all saw a future in which the League had superseded the Empire while the Commonwealth remained as its fully democratic heir.

7: From Empire/Commonwealth to League of Nations, and so what?

This thesis has argued there was in the interwar period a loosely defined group of political thinkers, here named the imperialist-internationalists, who were not linked by a formal organization, but who knew each other and worked towards the change from Empire to Commonwealth and the creation of the League of Nations. The question perhaps remains whether these debates and ideas are purely of historical interest or also have a more contemporary resonance.

I believe there are three main conclusions that can be drawn about the significance of the imperialist-internationalists, some of which hint at the potential value of their ideas for a contemporary age. In the first place, this thesis argues that E.H. Carr's rejection of the interwar thinkers, whom he dismissed as "utopians", showed a fundamental misunderstanding of the approach they were trying to take; rather than utopians, the imperialist-internationalists were idealists who sought to base their proposals on the realities and power structures they saw in the world around them. They believed in what Karl Popper in his famous 1945 book *The Open Society and its Enemies* called "piecemeal social engineering" instead of holistic solve-all-problems schemes. Their plans for securing peace and collaboration through the League of Nations were not a blueprint for a flawless and well-oiled sort of international organization the like of which the world had never seen before. Rather, they wished the League to copy what they saw as the already existing, somewhat clunky but overall efficient, machinery of the British Empire. There might still be ground for a fruitful political analysis of which, if any, parts of the old British imperial machinery of cooperation really worked and whether any useful lessons for modern international cooperation might be found. In the second place, the thesis has shown how they

sought to identify ways of reconciling the ideal of internationalism with the continued existence of fully independent states to allow for a framework for international cooperation in a post-imperial world—a dilemma that has been central to much subsequent reflection about international politics in the 20th and 21st centuries. Thirdly, and finally, the thesis has shown how they represented a Hegelian inspired approach to internationalism, in which imperialism provided a constructive foundation for a new form of true internationalism grounded in an understanding of historical change. This challenged both utopian internationalism that failed to engage with the tension between the principles of national sovereignty and internationalism, and radical socialist internationalism rooted in the idea that the disappearance of international conflicts depended on domestic revolutions within the major countries of the world.

Essential to all these main conclusions is the assumption that the imperialist-internationalists actually existed as a group, and they did, though they never defined themselves as such. The defining features of the group was their shared belief that: 1) the British Empire had become or was becoming a new and historically unique type of institution better named the British Commonwealth, whose members of their own free will collaborated for the common good; 2) there was a need for the League of Nations; 3) the League of Nations ought to copy the practices of the British Empire/Commonwealth, which was the only appropriate model for a world scale international organisation designed to secure international peace; 4) The League of Nations would not make the British Commonwealth superfluous. The core representatives of this group discussed in this thesis—Zimmern, Murray, Hall, and Smuts—were all committed to these ideas and shared the notion that the English, or British, character was uniquely open-minded and unbiased, and that British identity

was exceptional by dint of having transcended the baser principles of nationalism to become (or at least be in the process of becoming) thoroughly international.

Smuts promoted this idea both in his speech from May 1917, analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, where he argued that the exceptional features of the British Empire had allowed it to develop into an unprecedented form of international community, as well as his open letter on the resignation of General Beyer, discussed in Chapter 4, when he referred to South Africa having been given full freedom to realise its own national ideals under the auspices of the British Empire only a few years after it was conquered. In both cases, Smuts indirectly referred to the Roman Empire, and its spread of peace and the rule of law, while indicating that the British had surpassed it. Hall considered the British system to be particularly favourable to the development and spread of new ideas (see Chapter 4) and thought that the British had a "greater capacity ... for international co-operation" (Chapter 5). Zimmern, though wary of an English bias and a wish to impose Englishness and Shakespeare upon the world, all the same characterised the British national outlook as essentially international (Chapter 4), and believed that the English character was exceptional both for its sense of justice and government (Chapter 5). It was in this respect an ingrained aspect of their internationalism that all three men expected the process to be British in character, and inevitable that they used the British Empire as a model both ideologically and practically for their proposals for the League.

As shown in the introduction, modern scholars directly or indirectly associate most of the imperialist-internationalists with the utopians attacked by Carr in his seminal work *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*. It is indeed this association that appears to have limited the amount and quality of the scholarship on people like Murray and

Zimmern. Yet Carr's description of the League of Nations' project as utopian was misleading even according to his own definition of utopianism (which assumed that utopianism focused only on ideas without serious consideration of an analysis of historical and material conditions). The imperialist-internationalists used what they saw as a transformed Empire, the British Commonwealth of Nations, as a model for the British proposal for the League of Nations Covenant (as analysed in Chapter 5). Smuts, Zimmern, and Robert Cecil were deeply involved both in preparing the British proposal and, with the exception of Zimmern, negotiating the British point of view at the Peace Conference. Murray and Hall both publicly expressed ideas and suggestions about the formation of the League. All of them believed that the historical experience of the British Empire—and particularly the way it had changed over time—could serve as a practical model for the machinery of League and as a model for values and character. Even if they were deeply unrealistic about *how* the experiences of the British Empire might help to shape an international organisation intended to represent the whole world, they were not utopians by Carr's own definition of the term. Not only did Carr himself use the Commonwealth as a relevant model of international cooperation; it has also been shown throughout the thesis that the imperialist-internationalists believed that it was precisely the real historical experience of the British Empire-Commonwealth that made it a model for the League of Nations. Rather than utopians then, they were idealists who sought to put their ideals into practice by adopting and adapting a model already in place in the expectation of a viable result.

Looking back at the ideas of the imperialist-internationalist one hundred years later, it is easy to conclude that they were in many respects quite naïve. Hall, in a retrospective letter to an old colleague, Richard Casey, written in April 1963,

acknowledged that the ideas they had held for the Commonwealth in the nineteenth-twenties were unrealistic,⁵⁶⁹ and that the hope of convincing the world to model international cooperation on a British perception of the experience of the British Empire was overly optimistic. However, even though they were naïve, it is worth recognising how the imperialist-internationalists sought to combine a traditional line of political philosophy with their interpretation of recent international experience, in order to help create a global international forum to secure peace in the world in the future. From the outbreak of World War I, they had seen modern warfare as an existential threat to democracy and western civilisation, and responded by trying to identify the conditions that would prevent any further decent into barbarism. While the League of Nations clearly failed to prevent World War II, the United Nations was created in its place, which in spite of its own challenges survives to this day. So does the Commonwealth, and though there are probably few who can clearly define what the Commonwealth actually does, few countries are keen to leave it, while several others have joined or re-joined. It seems that it is for many countries an affiliation of some value. The imperialist-internationalists were thus not simple utopians, but rather idealist-realists, who failed to fully appreciate the complexity and speed of development.

A fundamental issue in international relations from the late nineteenth century onwards has been to find a suitable framework for handling internationalism and international cooperation in a world of nation states, an issue that became increasingly relevant from the early twentieth century and the end of World War I as the empires began to fall. As demonstrated throughout Chapter 2, empires were the default model

⁵⁶⁹ Hall Papers, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 5047, Box 23: "'Genesis of the Balfour Declaration.'" Reprint lists, correspondence etc.': Letter from Hall to Casey, 23 April 1963.

of international "cooperation" until the late nineteenth century, since no other framework really existed for making individual nations collaborate beyond vague treaties and occasional ideological or religious affinity. Even the claims to power of the Roman Church in the middle ages were framed within the discourse of "empire". The demise of empires created a vacuum and a never-ending debate about how to create a new framework of cooperation and even a degree of global governance. In that context, the problems that the imperialist-internationalists grappled with remain relevant today: How can a large group of independent states cooperate in a manner to secure peace and improve life for the people who live within them while at the same time remaining fully independent? And how can they simultaneously provide for collaboration on a large range of scientific and cultural issues, promote economic collaboration between the constituent parts, and permit free movement of labour, while still respecting the differences in culture and interests between the various individual states?

The solutions the imperialist-internationalists offered reflected their own experience as members of the British Empire who lived through the Great War, just as answers from later periods have similarly been the product of a specific set of historical circumstances. Nevertheless, at the core of all these ideas lies two areas of commonality. The first is the belief that some fundamental ideas are constructive for international collaboration regardless of historical context, such as the idea that a habit of international cooperation in everyday areas makes cooperation more likely on matters of peace and war. That idea was supported by Hall, Zimmern, and Cecil, and is a core value of the UN and the European Union. The second big area of commonality is the idea that peace is best secured by taking a realistic look at the actual conditions of the world, finding the areas where international cooperation will

give the most obvious benefits to the parties involved. This idea is clearly anchored in the historical context of any given period, as no period will offer the exact same conditions and areas for cooperation. In this context, then, the imperialist-internationalists provide an important contribution to the debate on internationalism in a post-imperial world.

The imperialist-internationalists were, ideologically speaking, first and foremost internationalists, but they subscribed to an understanding of internationalism as something born out of imperialism. Their view of history was basically Hegelian, as of course was that of the Marxists, but whereas the later considered history a predetermined succession of discontinuous epochs, the imperialist-internationalists, with their common early introduction to historicism as interpreted by T.H. Green at Oxford (Chapter 3), believed in a history that organically unfolded to reveal its character. Such a view is more associated with the Whig interpretation of history that looked askance at such ruptures as the American Revolution of the 18th century. It was seen in chapters 4-6 that the imperialist-internationalists saw the dual processes of the development of Empire into Commonwealth and the recognition of the Empire as a model for the creation of the League of Nations as natural progressions that flowed from the changing nature of the British Empire itself. While the outbreak of World War I was seen by Smuts and Murray as an existential danger to European civilization as well as the British Empire (chapter 4), both they and Zimmern concluded that it could still provide the conditions for an organic and non-revolutionary development of civilization into a more peaceful world subject to the rule of law. They continued to develop their ideas and activities throughout the War and afterwards, both in their efforts to change the Empire into a more democratic Commonwealth, and after the Armistice for the creation of the League of Nations

(Chapter 5). This meant, that from their perspective, the principles of New Diplomacy had already but put into action and tested in intra-imperial relations before the war, with the Imperial Conferences as key examples of it. But with their belief in organic growth, accepting New Diplomacy did not imply that they had to reject all aspects of Old Diplomacy, rather is suggested that the best aspects of Old Diplomacy should be kept and used along with the new framework for international relations.

As a group, the imperialist-internationalists belonged to the long tradition of seeing empires as a form of international organisation (as described in Chapter 2). As demonstrated in Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*, and much of Murray's work, the Oxford classicists were inspired by a Hellenism that reflected the Liberal interpretation of Greek history presented by Grote with the support of the Mill (chapter 3). Like Adam Smith, they considered the relationship between the Greek mother cities and colonies a relevant model for the British Empire, and agreed with Grote that the Athenian Empire, while not perfect, had brought prosperity, protection, and the ideals of democracy to the minor members of the Delian League. However, for all of them, the Roman Empire with its emphasis on imperial peace and an imperial citizenship that could be extended to all parts of the Empire was a model that had set the standard for the British Empire, with its own *Pax Britannica* and supranational understanding of British nationality. Just as Polybius claimed that the foundation for the might of Rome was partly its willingness to copy the best practices of the Greeks, so Hall in particular argued that the British Commonwealth was an ideal framework for the spread of new ideas (Chapter 4). With their Hegelian historicism, the imperialist-internationalists saw the British Empire as a natural successor to both Athens and Rome, implicitly adopting the medieval concept of *translatio imperii* by passing the legitimacy of empire on to Britain.

It was crucially not the idea of a Christian empire that was passed on, but rather the secular empire defended by Marsilius in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Chapter 2), something visible in *The Idea of the League of Nations*, co-authored by Zimmern and Murray, which rejected the exclusive nature of the Christian and Islamic Empires (Chapter 5). It was indeed a theme visible throughout Zimmern's work, with his consistent focus on the need for equal political rights regardless of geography, religion or race (chapters 4-6). Both Zimmern and Hall show some affinity to the ideal of Marsilius' bureaucratic empire, in which the prince should rely on experts (Chapter 2), with their view that a wide body of expert collaboration was needed to secure the best development of both Empire/Commonwealth and League of Nations (chapters 4 and 5).

However, in spite of all the points on which the imperialist-internationalists could agree with the tradition of empire, like many modern political thinkers they shared an unease with the concept of Empire *per se*. The aspects of international cooperation such as "the ease and security of travel and traffic" mentioned by Penn, or "a common bound of laws and government" described by Rousseau (chapter 2), were very palatable to them. But Murray, Hall, and Zimmern all strongly objected to the subjection of foreign races. The imperialist-internationalists agreed with Thucydides and Herodotus that the value of the might of the hegemon was to "do kindness to others" (Pericles' Funeral Oration, in chapter 2) and to act as protector keeping the world in perpetual peace as argued by Virgil and Livy (Chapter 2). It was, in other words, the internationalist rather than the imperialist part of the tradition to which the imperialist-internationalists adhered most strongly. They believed that, at least as regards the relations between Britain and the Dominions, the British Empire of their own day had become a new form of international organisation requiring a new name.

It was for this reason that the imperialist-internationalists rejected the name of “Empire” for what Hall and Zimmern called the third stage of the British Empire, instead promoting the term “the British Commonwealth of Nations” as the new *de facto* name for Britain and the Dominions, and in the long run as the new name of the entire organisation (Chapter 4). It is worth recognising that even though the new name took decades to become prevalent, they were ultimately successful in their push for the change. Smuts directly, and Hall indirectly, were also part of the debates that took place at the Imperial Conferences from 1921-1926, which culminated in the official adoption of the name “British Commonwealth of Nations”, and the principles of full autonomy, equality and cooperation in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 (Chapter 6). While the imperialist-internationalists all admitted that there were no strong legal bonds tying together the Commonwealth, and Zimmern specifically acknowledged that it was in principle drifting apart (Chapter 6), they all argued that the benefits of cooperation were such that no member would voluntarily chose to leave (Chapters 4 and 6). Rousseau had made exactly the same point 150 years earlier when discussing the Holy Roman Empire (Chapter 2).

Considering that the imperialist-internationalists believed in an internationalism that was British in character, it was a given that they would consider the British Commonwealth an essential part of the League of Nations, since without it the League would have neither the legitimacy nor the moral wisdom to set the path ahead. It was seen in Chapter 6 that a series of Imperial Conferences in the 1920s sought to clarify the position of the Dominions relative to Britain and their place in international society. The uncertainty that this revealed about the future led Zimmern, Murray and Hall to argue that the Commonwealth depended on the League of Nations for its continued existence, not least because it needed “peace everywhere and all the time”.

However, with their belief in British exceptionalism, it appeared consistent to them to argue that conversely the League was equally dependent on the Commonwealth to show the road to further development as a spearhead of civilised internationalism.

Thus, while the League was the *Deus ex Machina* that provided a framework in which the Commonwealth could continue to flourish, the Commonwealth was expected to be the eternal developing model for the League of Nations.

This imagined future of perpetual co-dependence of Commonwealth and League reflects the attempt of the imperialist-internationalists to reconcile the fact that they had reached two distinct endpoints which might seem to conflict with each other. From their Hegelian/Greenist perspective of history, there were two potential organic developments in the chain of history that led from the various imperfect forms of empire, involving some half-revealed ideas of universality and internationalism, and on to the emergence of a British Empire that was now itself transforming into something new. One was from Empire into Commonwealth and the other was from Empire into League of Nations. Chapter six showed how Zimmern and Murray both, at least at a subconscious level, seem to have realised that the development of the League could actually remove the need for the Commonwealth as an intellectual successor to the Empire—but neither of them was fully willing to concede that the Commonwealth was growing obsolete. That the League was necessary was from their perspective unquestionable, but that the Commonwealth should be sacrificed was fundamentally unimaginable, although they were perfectly capable of formulating all the reasons why it was already dissolving. The only way to solve this core problem of the two separate endpoints in a satisfactory manner was by showing that both remained essential to the existence of the other. They were bound to struggle to find an elegant and satisfactory way of achieving this.

It is this progression from imperialism to internationalism that demonstrates the core idea of the imperialist-internationalists: that imperialism with all its flaws was a legitimate precursor to a true internationalism. While the Marxists proclaimed the virtues of a Socialist Internationalism rooted in revolutionary change, the imperialist-internationalists promoted a liberal internationalism based on progress and continuity, where the excesses and cruelty of the empires (which in spite of their often rose-tinted glasses they knew existed) could be shed off as a remnant of a less enlightened past. The experience of Empire provided lessons in understanding how international cooperation and a sense of being part of a greater international community could be reconciled with remaining a proud member of one's own nation. The development from Empire to League of Nations was a natural process in which the empires of the past were left behind while their positive aspects endured.

APPENDICES:

A: Table of Names of Empire in Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (1920)

Chapter/ term	"Empire"	"British Empire"	"British Commonwealth of Nations"	"British Commonwealth"	"the Commonwealth" (ref to Brit, not Au)	"British Group of States"	"British Group"	"the Group"
Preface	5	2	1	6	3	2	0	0
1	14	1	2	8	0	0	2	4
2	8	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
3	23	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
4	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	17	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
6	29	3	1	5	0	1	1	9
7	18	8	2	3	1	1	1	5
8	24	7	3	6	0	3	2	3
9	53	10	1	12	0	3	0	22
10	36	11	0	21	1	0	3	18
11	28	27	1	27	2	3	14	11
Total	262	76	11	89	7	15	24	72

B: Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (1920), pp. 198-99.

1	These quotations [one by Gen. Smuts, another by Lord Milner] –the first taken from a
2	speech of the man who was chiefly responsible for the scotching of the Imperial
3	Federation movement in England during the War, and the second from a speech of a
4	lifelong advocate of Imperial Federation –sum up aptly the new ideas as to the nature
5	and purpose of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and indicate the kind of
6	constitutional reconstruction which the special post-war Imperial Conference,
7	provided for in the Constitutional Resolution of 1917, will be called upon to make.
8	This Conference will meet probably in 1921. If we may judge from the opinions
9	expressed freely in 1917 and in the Dominion Treaty Debates in 1919-20 it is likely to
10	be wider than a mere Conference of Cabinets, being attended not only by ministers
11	but also by the leaders of the opposition parties.
12	As indicated in the 1917 Resolution the work of the Special Conference will be
13	threefold. (a) It will consider the view expressed in that Resolution that the principles

14 upon which the future government of the Empire should be based are: (1) the equal
15 and autonomous nationhood of each self-governing State of the Group, and (2) co-
16 operation by means of continuous consultation followed by “such necessary concerted
17 action, founded on consultation, as the several governments may determine.” (b)
18 Having accepted these principles it will take the necessary measures to free the
19 Dominions from the last remaining marks of the old dependency –thus realizing the
20 ideal of complete equality of nationhood. (c) It will then plan and construct the
21 machinery of government required by the British Group for effective co-operation in
22 common concerns.
23 [...]
24 In the last three years the problems raised by the 1917 Resolution have been discussed
25 in all parts of the Empire. They have been the subject of numerous speeches by
26 eminent statesmen, especially Sir Robert Borden and General Smuts. What is even
27 more important, they have been the subject of intimate and private discussions
28 between British and Dominion statesmen during the many months of the last two
29 years in which these statesmen have been thrown together in London and in Paris. It is
30 fairly evident that out of the discussions of the Peace Conference period, a more
31 definite conception, not merely of the basic principles, but also of the general
32 organization of the British Group in the future, has begun to emerge. This conception
33 is that of the British Empire as a Group of States which constitutionally are absolutely
34 free and equal, and which co-operate by means of continuous consultation followed
by concerted group-action taken in the name of the common Crown. Out of this
conception sprang the carefully thought-out procedure which was adopted with regard
to the appointment of Dominion plenipotentiaries and the signing and ratification of
the Peace treaty by the Dominions.

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