

Class A. 1944

Discuss this statement: "The whole success of International Collaboration depends on the working together of all the peoples united in allegiance to the British Crown."

Preface to the Essay.

1. An historical perspective of the problem - how far has it been successful in the past?
2. The British Commonwealth as an example of International Collaboration. Anglo-Niobi Problem - the 'Colour' problem in South Africa and Kenya - Europeans working together successfully in Canada and the significance of this. - Arabs and Jews in Palestine. The Contact of Civilizations.
3. Some factors which make collaboration easier within the British Commonwealth than it would be in any other International Organization. eg "Young" countries, no frontier problems, traditional allegiance to the Crown.
4. The problem of national sovereignty - Imperial Conferences.
5. The Economic policy of the Commonwealth - Growth between the Wars of Imperial Preference - Ottawa Conferences - Return to Free Trade 1938.
6. Conclusion - the problem of collaboration and the British Commonwealth as seen by General Smuts. - the impossibility of a definite answer.

N.B. these divisions do not coincide with separate paragraphs in the Essay.

GORDON H. H. GLASGOW. BORN [REDACTED] 45 YORK RD.
BIRKDALE, SOUTHPORT. ATTENDED MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL
CROSBY.

Discuss this statement: "The whole success of International collaboration depends on the working together of all the peoples united in allegiance to the British Crown".

International collaboration can be achieved either by compulsory conquest or by the voluntary surrender of sovereignty on the part of the individual state concerned. In the past there have been many attempts at the first type of collaboration, but few at the second. Alexander the Great built up by conquest a vast Empire stretching from Macedonia to the valley of the Indus. Napoleon in his turn bestrode the narrow world like a Colossus. Hitler with his "Herrenvolk" idea has tried to superimposed upon the world an international "New Order"; and will no doubt in future, develop a mythical Hitler legend after the Napoleonic fashion in which he too will endeavour to vindicate himself as the champion of some noble ideal.

The Roman Empire is however one of the few instances in which such an Empire, set up by conquest, has endured for any length of time. Perhaps its only rival is the British Commonwealth of Nations. We also have conquered large areas of the world - for example India - and have brought peace and prosperity by ending tribal wars and feuds. In addition we have admitted the one-time conquered into citizenship of the Empire. And we can envisage in the future that the collapse of our Empire would be followed by another Dark Ages in which "the powers of blood and unbroken bodily forces will resume their ancient lordship". On these grounds alone we could justify the existence of the British Commonwealth of Nations in the same way as now, in the light of history, we can realise the beneficial part played by the old Hapsburg Empire in solving the racial problems of the Balkan peninsula. We can only appreciate the present when it has become the past.

Within the British Commonwealth we have examples on a small scale of the great issues, which will face the post-war world. National animosities, religious questions, colour differences and economic problems - all are present in this "nascent international society" as Mr Norman Angell calls it.

1. O. Spengler: "The Decline of the West". (George Allen & Unwin 2 vols)

Anglo-Irish ill-feeling is in many ways a psychological problem whose roots stretch far back into the past. Ireland experienced neither the Roman invasions nor the Saxon invasions; hence she is of purely Celtic origin with all the characteristic imaginative qualities which one generally associates with that remarkable race. The island was presented as a papal gift to Henry II of England, and its invasion by the latter's Norman forces under the command of Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke ("Strongbow") heralded seven and a half centuries of discontent, internal division and exploitation. They were centuries, as Sir Horace Plunkett says, for "Englishmen to remember and Irishmen to forget". But all the attempts made by this country to redeem her mistakes have failed. The Irish poet, George Russell ("A.E.") has pleaded with his fellow countrymen to forget the past and to think only of the future; but "the tale of what has been" cannot be erased from men's minds.

"The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones;"

says Mark Antony gloomily: and Southern Ireland, which was granted Dominion Status in 1922, has shown her inability to forget the past by her neutrality in this war. If the people of Ireland could be made to work together with the people of England, Scotland and Wales "united in allegiance to the British Crown", then an important precedent would be established for the working out of a common future based on a constructive and not a negative use of history. On a precedent such as this, it is conceivable that many dreams, which have hitherto faded away like hot air almost as soon as they were born, may come true. For example provided that the idea of "Herrenvolk" has not been too deeply ingrained in the German mentality, the longed-for revolution in the German soul, which Heine prescribed, might take place. Bad feeling between Russia and Poland, which like the Irish problem has its roots in history, might be alleviated. In short the settlement of Anglo-Irish hostility would indirectly (that is as an example) open up new avenues of possible development leading to a "green and pleasant land" in which disputes are settled by international discussion and not by international war.

Past crimes and their heritage do not however completely explain the lack of collaboration between certain portions of the Empire; sometimes the problem is even more

difficult. In South Africa and in Kenya the British Commonwealth is faced with two peoples, one of them black and the other white, living together in the same country with entirely different economic standards. If the native Bantus or Kaffirs (together with the rapidly dying out Bushmen and Hottentots), who are in the majority, were to be granted complete self equality with the European peoples, then it is difficult to see how it would be possible to avoid a decline in the standard of living. "Nowhere, absolutely nowhere, can white labour compete with coloured labour"². The Hilton-Young Commission which was sent out to Kenya in 1927, pointed out the dangers with which self-government was fraught in such a country where Europeans constitute only a small minority and therefore tend to exploit native labour. To grant representative government to a handful of whites would give them an unfair advantage; whilst once the natives became "politically-minded" the process would be reversed. A similar problem was faced by the Spaniards in Mexico and in many parts of South America and was solved by intermarriage with the natives - a manner repugnant to the British and Dutch. The American Civil War was in an endeavour to find a solution to the colour question; and was only successful in so far as the negroes have since then been admitted into the learned professions and have founded their own Universities: otherwise there is still strict segregation between the Blacks and the Whites in the United States. In one sense the Immigration Laws passed by the governments of both the United States and the Commonwealth of Australia are an attempt to prevent the influx of cheap coloured labour ("The Yellow Peril" which grew up with the turn of the century - e.g. C.H. Pearson: "National Life and Character") in order to maintain the relatively high standard of living.

But there is more opportunity of working out by discussion and collaboration some solution to the problem within the British Commonwealth than outside it. To persist in refusing to recognize the equality of the coloured man with the white man and to endeavour to hide behind a wall of battleships and of bayonets is clearly impractical. The colour problem must be faced and solved by agreement and it is in Kenya and South Africa that the first step can be made towards that end.

² quoted W.R. Inge: "Talks in a Free Country" (Putnam) p. 185.

Important sections of opinion in this country and elsewhere believe that the future of Europe, if not of the world, depends on a strong Federal Union. The United States of America and the Swiss Confederation are cited as examples. Although the British Commonwealth of Nations cannot claim in itself to be a similar example, for it has no written constitution, no common central government, no common foreign policy, no common customs union, currency or budget and no common armed forces; yet, on the other hand, individual members of the Commonwealth like Canada and the Union of South Africa are first-class illustrations.

Let us consider the case of Canada, which was originally a French Roman Catholic settlement, and which became, after 1783, a home for the United Empire Loyalists. As a result of this and of Pitt's Canada Act (1791) the English and French grew up side by side in Upper and Lower Canada. It was not until the nineteenth century that conflict broke out and the position in 1838 was aptly described by Lord Durham, as "two nations warring together within the borders of one state". But the situation changed with the Federal Union, which came into operation in 1867 and Canada emerged as a free and self-governing nation consisting of a population of mixed descent. Even German communities were able to fulfill their obligations as responsible citizens of this Dominion in spite of Lord Vansittart's diagnosis of the German national character. It was a German-Canadian, Sir Adam Beck who established the provincial hydro-electric system in Canada. Thus the Canadian solution proves that communities of entirely different racial stock, colour and social development can live together and work together for the common good within the boundaries of the same state. In addition it illustrates another point of vital importance to the peace-makers of tomorrow. The Canadian federation, like the Swiss Confederation, was a slow growth from below and not a thing imposed from above. Federalism was the wish of the people. "The permanence of an institution", writes Lord Bryce, "depends not merely on the material interests that support it, but on its conformity with the deep-rooted sentiment of the men for whom it has been made".³ I agree with Mr Wilson Harris⁴ that in the case of Europe the process of educating the people to the idea of Federalism would be a question at least of decades, if not of generations.

³ Bryce: "The Holy Roman Empire". Chapter 24. p. 488-9.

⁴ Wilson Harris: "Ninety-Nine Gower Street". Constable. p. 147.

The clash between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine - the Holy Land which possesses such pregnant memories for the Sons of Israel - is partly a repercussion of the hostility shown towards Jewry in modern Europe. The conception that the Holy Land should become a national home for the Jews was put into practice with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The tragedy was that the Jews arrived in such large numbers and their wealth, energy and initiative proved so prolific that the native Arabs, who had been in possession of the land since the time of Alfred the Great, were forced to turn against them in self-defence (or so they allege). Collaboration between the Jews and the Arabs in this Mandate of the British Commonwealth would be a great stimulus to the act of reparation which the Western European peoples owe to the Jews.

Can Tennyson's "Parliament of Man" be anything more than an ideal, so long as different Civilizations disagree over the fundamental moral standards and meanings of Life? Now that the Reformation has reached its full bloom with the complete disruption of Western Christendom in two successive world wars, it is difficult to believe with Mr Christopher Dawson that the peoples and states of Europe "retain the half-conscious memory of their former spiritual unity".⁵ Britons have more in common with Americans than with Italians ~~or~~ Rumanians and Spaniards show more affinity with Latin America than with any part of Europe. But an even greater disparity is apparent between Western and Eastern ideals. Within the British Commonwealth the Indian problem is an obvious illustration. Although the British Government has brought to that country justice and efficiency, the Indian character has never been fully understood.⁶ Perhaps it is impossible for one brought up in the Western school of thought to appreciate what the contemplation of religious issues and of eternal must mean to an Indian, who can "watch the legions thunder past in patient deep disdain". (Matthew Arnold). The setting up of a world-wide Federation will therefore demand two things. Firstly more agreement among the Western European peoples; and secondly, taking Anglo-Indian relations as an illustration, more effort on our part to appreciate the Oriental view of Life.

⁵ C. Dawson: "The Judgement of the Nations". Sheed & Ward 1943 p.23.

⁶ I cannot help thinking of Dr Aziz - E.M. Forster: "A Passage to India" (Everymans 1944).

But the example which the British Commonwealth offers us is not completely "foolproof". Important reasons can be found why collaboration should be more successful within the Commonwealth than outside it. Plans for Imperial defence demand some form of agreement between the component parts of the Empire. Traditional allegiance to the Crown is, as Lord Roseberry, said, the binding force holding the Empire together. Such a central loyalty would be difficult to find in any League of Nations. Frontier difficulties, the bugbear of international peace, are virtually non-existent. Moreover the British Commonwealth consists in the main of "Young" countries, whereas international peace depends on collaboration between the "older" and more fully developed countries of the World.

An international organisation would apparently demand the surrender of sovereignty on the part of the individual states. This however has not happened in the case of the Dominions. The Commonwealth is not a close brotherhood (the Statute of Westminster bears witness to this) since there is no conception in the Dominions of a Federal government for the whole Empire. Undoubtedly in the past Federation has been a guiding principle in the minds of British Imperialists. Chatham pondered over schemes in the eighteenth century. Political scientists like Henry Sedgewick and James Bryce expounded its academic merits in the nineteenth century. Tennyson, perhaps rather deluded by the mirage which the material prosperity of the Age seemed to present, was, in Locksley Hall (1842), already envisaging a world-wide federation. Nevertheless the Dominions are unwilling that their own sovereign parliaments should be superceded by the legislation of a Federal government in which their own influence would be small. But as Seeley has pointed out, a common way of thought is one of the strongest foundations of governments. Hence there is among the constituent members of the Commonwealth a real sense of partnership in a spirit federation. Robert Browning epitomizes this spirit in "Home-Thoughts, from the Sea" -

"Here and here did England help me: how can I help
England?" - say

Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise
and pray,

When Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa".
The conception of regular Imperial Conferences (in practice every four years) has unconsciously developed like the English Parliaments of the fourteenth century, as a solution to the

problem of closer union while at the same time being compatible with the retention of national sovereignty on the part of the five Dominions (Newfoundland temporarily ceased to be a Dominion in 1933, following the economic crises of the post-war era). Thus collaboration between the component parts of the Commonwealth has been established without the creation of any new constitutional bond. Perhaps one might agree with Mr Harold Butler in his statement that this is "the peculiar value of the British experience".⁷

Economic problems have always played an important in Imperial relations and we can see from the Ottawa Conferences of July 1932 that agreement has not always been universal. As a result of these meetings all hopes for an economic union of the British Commonwealth were dashed to the ground. The Dominions were the greatest beneficiaries under the new system and the mother country "footed the bill" (the words of Professor Knaplund). But Professor Lionel Robbins has pointed out that there are many material reasons why the settlement of economic matters should be easier within the Commonwealth than in a European Federation. The Dominions are unusually rich in mineral resources; their widespread geographical positions make tariffs and other causes of friction less oppressive whilst external pressure must act in some way as a cohesive force. Although the Ottawa Conferences did not establish an economic union of the Empire as a whole, yet the Mercantilist policy of Imperial Preference was revived. This policy was not in itself conducive to world peace, for as Miss Barbara Ward writes, the Dominions and the United Kingdom "came together to negotiate a tariff settlement advantageous to each other and disadvantageous to everybody else just because they were members of the British Commonwealth of Nations".⁸ By the trade agreements of 1938 this policy was reversed.

The tale which the fair Muse, Clio, unfolds to us concerns itself with the continual development of one problem - that is how can Mankind live in peace with his neighbour. Some men have attempted to solve the problem by compulsion: but the British Commonwealth of Nations has solved the problem in another way. In the words of General Smuts "this British Commonwealth of Nations does not stand for standardization or denationalization but for the fuller, richer and more various life of all the nations comprised in it. Even the

⁷ H. Butler: "The Lost Peace". Faber & Faber.

⁸ B. Ward: "The International Share-out". Nelson. p. 64

nations which fought against it, like my own, must feel that their cultural interests, their language, their religion are as safe and as secure under the British flag as those of the children of your own household and your own blood".

At the moment there can be no "one answer solution" to the problem of international collaboration. We can merely discuss the question and hope that our efforts have not been as futile as the efforts of Milton's devils who, after conducting the debate on the hillside, "found no end in wandering mazes lost". ("Paradise Lost" Bk 2, 1661.) ^{Oxford Edition of Text.} I have endeavoured within the limited scope of the essay to illustrate two points. Firstly in what respects the British Commonwealth of Nations is, or could be, a model example of international collaboration; and secondly in what respects it differs from any other "Federal" system which might be up. England once was the Morning Star of the Reformation; she may well heal the wounds which she then inflicted by offering to "the world as a whole something the world passionately desires, order, progress and eternal peace".⁹

⁹ Dr Wilhelm Dibelius. Professor of Eng. Lit. at Berlin University quoted J.A.R. Marriott "Quarterly Review" Jan. 1944.

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This list is not 'water tight,' as can be seen from the footnotes of my essay, but it includes the principal books which have influenced me. The Cambridge History of the British Empire is, of

course, the standard Reference work.

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