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G H A N A .

What are the links and loyalties which hold the Commonwealth together in the second half of the twentieth century, and are they likely to endure?

A brief summary:

Gradually, a new conception of empire has evolved, the conception that an empire is not necessarily made up of one ruling nation and a number of subject peoples, but of a group of free, independent nations drawn together, not by force of military arms, like the association between Russia and her "satellite states", but by a common allegiance to the Head of the association; ^{by} common interests of race, language, religion and custom which are stronger in the "old members"; by varying degrees of common ^{history} association with conquest and rule by Britain; by common association or friendship with the United States; or even merely by dependence one on another for their safety and prosperity.

With one exception, Eire, these ties proved strong enough to bring all the member countries into the Second World War on the side of Britain. Whether the Commonwealth will remain ^{intact} will depend largely on its being able to preserve its multi-racial character, and its members taking a more sympathetic view of one another's problems and helping one another more liberally, for "the only element which ^{can} give a tensile quality to human ties is a sense of duty in man to each other."*

* Sir John
Marriot.

As a matter of history, the whole Commonwealth is the product of British Imperialism; each member country has been her subject people one time or the other. In the 17th and 18th centuries, England founded, mainly by peaceful settlements, a colonial Empire in North America and in the Caribbean. This first Empire crumbled down with the American Revolt, but from its ruins quickly arose the second Empire. The "Empire Loyalists" who settled in New Brunswick and Ontario were the pioneers. Advantage was also taken of Cook's discovery of Australia, first as a convict settlement, then as an outlet for the growing British population. New Zealand was settled later on. India, Ceylon, Cape Colony, Malaya and a horde of many islands were the fruits of Britain's victory over Napoleon. The African colonies were acquired a little later. The loss of the American colonies taught British statesmen a lesson which, fortunately for all of us, they overlearned. Determined to avoid blunders that had alienated the North American colonies, British statesmen resolved to train for independence, the component items of the second Empire.

"Emancipate your colonies," was Jeremy Bentham's advice, and before the end of Queen Victoria's reign, all the more important British colonies were self-governing. Though completely autonomous regarding internal affairs, these self-governing countries were in foreign affairs, subject to the autocratic control of Whitehall. But if they were "jointly to ~~sway~~^{wield} the sword" as they did in the Great War and in the Second World War, they claimed the right "jointly to sway the sceptre." The claim was just, and was promptly conceded. At the end of the Great War, the Dominions achieved a new status in the British Commonwealth as equal partners with the former "mother-country". The Statute of Westminster which defined the status of the Dominions as:

"...autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any respect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations"

shows clearly that no member was obliged to remain in the Commonwealth on attainment of her Independence; there certainly were no commitments. In fact, the Republics of Eire and Burma are out. Why did the others remain in it? Are the reasons why they remained in the Commonwealth strong enough to endure the strains in the modern world?

Perhaps the greatest of all the loyalties which bind the members of the Commonwealth together is the Crown. Until recently the essential connection between Crown and Empire was hidden by the fact that there were so many other links. For instance, the British Parliament was competent to legislate for the whole Empire; the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was competent to decide appeal cases for the whole Empire. But when the Statute of Westminster declared that the other Dominions and Britain were all legal equals, these links vanished, and the power that the Crown ^{has} had of holding the Commonwealth together was seen in its proper perspective. As clearly stated by Sir Winston Churchill in a speech at the time of the Queen's accession:

"There is no doubt that of all the institutions which have grown up among us over the centuries or sprung into being in our life time, the Constitutional Monarchy is the most deeply founded and dearly cherished by the whole association of our peoples.

"In the present generation it has acquired a meaning incomparably more powerful than any one had dreamed possible in former years. The Crown has become the mysterious link, I may say the magic link, which unites our loosely bound but strongly interwoven Commonwealth of Nations, states and races. People who would never tolerate the assertions of written constitution which implies any diminution of their independence are foremost to be proud of their loyalty to the Crown."

The common allegiance to the Crown was begun by the first British colonies, which were mostly, settlements by people of British origin, and here is where the common interests of race, language, religion and customs come in. This was the practice till India and Pakistan, by becoming Republics, destroyed

* Kingston
Derry.

this common allegiance, but owing to the flexibility of the unique Empire, paradoxically, the Crown did not lose its "cementing" quality; it is the symbol of the Commonwealth, and the Sovereign of Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century is "not 'a' link but 'the' link"* between the component parts of the Commonwealth.

Royal Tours in the Commonwealth do a lot of good in the way of strengthening the bonds that bind the member-countries together. They give the Dominion citizens, conscious as they are of the new nations to which they belong, a warmer feeling towards the Commonwealth. Force in colonial days has given way to persuasion, and the Crown is the spirit which may make it possible for the Empire to survive the shocks which are quite inevitable, with the member-countries pursuing so many diverging interests and policies, because the Crown plays a purely psychological part. This point is clearly illustrated by the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. H. S. Sahrawardy:

"The question of considering the position of the Queen can better be appreciated against the background of any other similar combination.

"I visualised, for instance, a number of countries of the Middle East getting together in some form of co-operative and consultative body. But the practical difficulty was that there was no symbolic Head round which they could revolve, no cementing force, no force which can bring them together on the same platform." The Crown is really a powerful link binding the Commonwealth countries together. Royal Tours enhance this quality further.

Although the Crown is a very powerful link, and although the Sovereigns of Britain, especially the present one and her father, are devoted to the Commonwealth, as their messages show, the Crown alone however, could not have attracted Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ghana and Malaya to remain with the United Kingdom in the Commonwealth, because emerging countries are primarily concerned with their prosperity and security, both of which

the Commonwealth offers her members in her own peculiar way. These benefits we must examine, but it is the underlying history and traditions which must be examined first.

The history of British Imperialism has woven a thread around the Commonwealth countries, binding them into a group, distinct from all other nations, for throughout the Empire, British rule implanted certain characteristics and political ways of life, particularly, the British type of Parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. British games and customs, their language and literature, their systems of measurements and weights, their system of currency, and even their systems of transacting business were exported in their bulk to the colonies, some of which now make up the Commonwealth. Individuals, and indeed nations, get along better if they understand each other, and a common language does a lot in the way of fostering understanding between peoples. At International Assemblies like the United Nations, languages divide the Nations into groups; French speaking nations will form one, the English one, the Slavs one, and so on. This makes the Commonwealth countries feel they are a distinct group; and so they are. British customs, like driving on the left, operate in most of the member-countries. Sports, too, are a powerful link in the latter half of the twentieth century. Cricket, perhaps the "most English" of all the British games, is played throughout the Empire. Outside the Empire, cricket is unknown. This fact alone should ^{show clearly} explain why that the Commonwealth is a true natural group; the more so because it was not planned. But, admittedly, links such as shown by common games ^{are} ~~of~~ more of the common man's interests; they are of relatively small importance in diplomatic circles, and after all, it was what the politicians thought of the Commonwealth that their respective countries remained in it. It is Britain's legacy to her former colonies in Government and political ways of life that influences the politicians.

Throughout the Empire, British rule implanted certain characteristics ^{that} have sunk so deep that they have become part of the national being of the countries in the Commonwealth. Common

Parliamentary Government is one of the major factors of unity in the Commonwealth. It produces civil servants, Parliamentarians and all those who hold constitutional appointments, at identical level in the various countries. They have identical rights, identical status and identical duties in their respective countries. It is possible, therefore, for member countries to meet at the same level and the representatives, who may have been to the same University and taken the same Examinations in their youth, to speak the same political language. Then, too, there is the similarity in the way the Commonwealth countries developed and became independent of Britain, and this perhaps offers them their best opportunity to unite. The whole British Empire has been compared with a fleet of ships in a race, the end of which race is complete independence. They are all plying the same waters, encountering and surmounting the same obstacles here, and similar obstacles there. In each case, independence was achieved by a challenge of native parliamentary democracy to the parliamentary democracy of Britain. To their common historical background and experience the countries of the Commonwealth owe their distinguishing feature that marks them off from foreign countries. This is ^{their} possession of unique capacity to co-operate. This is the pre-condition of the unity of the Commonwealth.

Granted this unique capacity to co-operate, member-countries have interest in making the best use of it. The various Governments gain by being able to count on the goodwill of the others. They are able to count on the understanding of the others; ~~and~~ they are able to count on the general support of the others. They can only do so, however, in so far as they are willing to take the views and interests of other member countries into account when forming their policies. There is thus ^a greater consultation between Commonwealth countries. Some Commonwealth thinkers and statesmen have advocated an Empire Federation, or at least, the working out of common policies, when they have "deplored the ultimate looseness and fragility of the British Commonwealth that is replacing the Empire". It is only in the economic field that working out of common

policies have been achieved, and this is a strong cord binding the Commonwealth countries together. To teach somebody the skill in co-operation, you should give him the opportunity to become co-operative by supplying him with an intelligent reason for such co-operation, and you can successfully do this by making the benefits of co-operation and collaboration apparent. This, the Commonwealth has done very well. One has only to take up a newspaper, and the benefits of co-operation in the economic field are crystal clear. These benefits may take the form of experts, machinery, especially agricultural machinery, and loans.

Although in the other fields, especially Health, Commonwealth countries have joined forces in fighting the common enemy — the disease or pest concerned — the probability of their pursuing common policies is enhanced by the existence of mutual interest, and to a lesser degree, by the fact that they share the same political heritage.

Nevertheless, to small countries like Ghana, Ceylon and Malaya, the Commonwealth offers a medium through which they can express their opinions and wishes, because obviously, a plan backed by the Commonwealth carries more weight than a plan presented by a comparatively insignificant country like Ghana. The fact that the Commonwealth traditionally has a temporary seat on the Security Council illustrates how the voice of a small country can be thrown out through a large medium, and because it is through that medium, it is felt and greatly respected. This is actually happening at the United Nations. Ceylon has recently been elected to fill the Commonwealth seat on the Security Council. This is a great advantage to the member countries, especially the small, underdeveloped ones, and it is a powerful link which holds some, if not all of the member countries together in the Commonwealth, in the latter half of the twentieth century.

In defence, technically, indeed, each Dominion is responsible for her own defence and any contribution it may choose towards assisting a sister partner. But since they are able to count on the help of one another in the event of an attack, they feel much safer in the Commonwealth than they would

outside it. This again is of the vital importance to member countries, especially when they have just emerged as nations, because all their resources must be used in developing the industries, agriculture and social services, communications, education and health and on things which are of primary importance for their prosperity and for raising the living conditions of their people. Armaments are a heavy drain on the coffers of nations. The Commonwealth countries score a big point over foreign countries here. Since they can count on the help of their sister-partners, they buy arms only after some years of existence when they can afford them. The security, then, which the Commonwealth offers her member countries in its own way, is a great link binding the Commonwealth countries together.

Finally, a common friendship with the United States is a psychological factor which keeps the Commonwealth countries together. Every Commonwealth country has an extremely close relationship with the United States of America. These ties are either economic or military, either of which is of utmost importance to a nation, or sometimes even both. To be economically prosperous and preserve her sovereignty is what every nation desires. New Zealand and Australia have military relations with the United States in the A.N.Z.U.S. pact. The United Kingdom and Canada have a military alliance with her in the N.A.T.O. Pakistan is allied to her in the S.E.A.T.O. India counts on her for the successful implementation of her development projects, and finally it seems she is going to assist Ghana make the Volta River Scheme a realization. Each of these members has a close tie with the United States. It is this very closeness with the United States that brings member countries closer still because if the countries were wholly on their own, the tremendous economic and military attractions of the United States would completely draw them to its orbit. It is only by holding together have they the chance of associating in their different way with the United States on more equal terms. This common friendship with the United States is thus, a strong

link holding the component parts of the Commonwealth together.

The links, enumerated above, are strong. But can they endure? If mathematical proportion is of any use as a guide in prophesying, then, one can say with some confidence that the Commonwealth has a long future. Of the eleven countries which have become independent of Britain, nine have remained in partnership with her. They remained because they found the terms attractive - free, independent and equal in status to anyone of the members - and the rewards invaluable, or perhaps they thought they should not part with Britain since she had nurtured them so well. But the fact that a larger proportion has remained should not blind us not to see that Eire and Burma have left. Why did they leave? It is a good conjecture to say that they either did not find the benefits worthwhile or they had not been fed enough on the Commonwealth spirit. Although the links binding the member nations together are strong and numerous, "like a network embedded in a concrete, the Commonwealth holds more than itself together ... but steel of the wrong temper may be as brittle as glass. The only element which can give a tensile quality to human ties is a sense of duty in men to each other."

* Sir John

Maniot.

The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are among the twelve richest nations in the world while India, Pakistan and Ceylon are among the poorest in the world. Wealth should be shared as evenly as possible; or at least, more ^{and aids} loans ^{should} be made available to the poorer member nations, because ^{these} ^{making manifest} aids and loans, apart from ~~possessing~~ the rewards of co-operation, help reduce the gap between the rich ^{countries} and the poor ones in the Commonwealth. When the gap is too wide, the rich nations cannot but feel that the poor ones are subordinate to them, and as soon as they start feeling that, "the splendid product of accidents" - the Commonwealth - is corroded.

The Commonwealth should preserve its multi racial character. Racialism in any form will bring about division - first class members and second class members - but this would not be in keeping with the spirit of the Commonwealth. This does not,

however, advocate the expulsion of South Africa, as some people have advocated. Admittedly, it is a strain in the Commonwealth, but there are others like it: there is the caste system in India; Pakistan is a Muslim democracy; the Central African Federation has her own colour troubles; racial relationships are not all very good in Ceylon. Should all these be expelled too? The exclusion of South Africa would be short-sighted, unwise. Is there any guarantee that things will change after expulsion? Whatever influence there is in support of ~~of~~ liberal opinion for better relationships would be lost if South Africa left the Commonwealth. This does not mean to say either that better relationships should not be advocated.

Although there is no reason to believe that things would change, in the words of Sir John Marriott, "The British Commonwealth of Nations is a unique phenomenon in politics. On the stage of human history it stands apart, alone. No precedents exist for the guidance of its leaders" ~~and~~ it does no harm to avoid taking chances. A policy of educating the public in the first instance will do a lot to ^{enhance the future of the Commonwealth.} A policy of educating the public

Although the Commonwealth has very strong ties - the Crown, Historical, Economic and Cultural - they are not water-tight; there are loop-holes somewhere, or at least ^{so} France and Burma have left us gaping. If the Commonwealth is to survive the strains of the latter half of the twentieth century, it behoves all to realise that the multi-racial character of the Commonwealth should be preserved. Economic neglect, too, can lead to fragmentation because the poor African and Asian members would be underated by their associates. Once this starts, corrosion is very rapid. The world would come to a sorry end if the Commonwealth should be no more, through short sightedness in racial and economic collaboration. Its splendid new concept of Empire would be lost to the world. Its example of internationalism would be a failure, and nations would not think it worthwhile to cooperate in an association when they point at the fragmentation of the Commonwealth. No, what decades of trial and error have built up should not ~~disintegrate~~^{disintegrate} so!

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