



THE IMPACT OF THE COMMONWEALTH ON CHURCHILL'S EUROPE

El impacto de la Commonwealth en la Europa de Churchill

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Focusing from the time of his electoral defeat in July 1945 until the end of his second term as Prime Minister (October 1951-April 1955), this article examines the impact the Commonwealth had on Churchill's Europe. Following the end of the Second World War Churchill's Europe was fragile, yet not broken beyond all repair. Rather than weaken world organisations, such as the United Nations or a united post-war Europe, Churchill argued that the British Commonwealth would strengthen such liaisons. Analysing Churchill's key relationships with the heads of the Commonwealth, reveal him to have been a true European – where security and democracy took precedence. His realism and pragmatism in the face of ever-changing, ever-evolving world-wide post-war alliances, where the Commonwealth arguably played a significant role, offers a stark contrast to the more common image of Churchill the “die-hard” imperialist.



Abstract

Churchill; Commonwealth; India; Nehru; Australia; Menzies; Curtin; South Africa; Smuts; New Zealand; Fraser; Holland; ANZUS; America; Canada; St. Laurent; Cold War; Korean War; Malayan Emergency.



Key words

Churchill; Commonwealth; India; Nehru; Australia; Menzies; Curtin; Sudáfrica; Smuts; Nueva Zelanda; Fraser; Holland; ANZUS; América; Canadá; St. Laurent; Guerra Fría; Guerra de Corea; Emergencia Malaya.



Fechas

Centrándonos en el periodo de tiempo comprendido entre la derrota electoral en julio de 1945 hasta el final del segundo mandato como primer ministro de Winston Churchill, este artículo examina el impacto que la Commonwealth tuvo en la Europa de Churchill. Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial la Europa de Churchill era frágil, pero no aún no estaba descompuesta y sin remedio. Lejos de debilitar las organizaciones internacionales como las Naciones Unidas o la Europa unida de la postguerra, Churchill defendió que la Commonwealth reforzaría dichas relaciones. Analizando las relaciones fundamentales entre Churchill y los dirigentes de la Commonwealth, revelan que Churchill fue un verdadero europeo, para quien la seguridad y la democracia tienen prioridad. Su realismo y pragmatismo ante las alianzas internacionales de la postguerra, que se caracterizaban por ser siempre cambiantes y en continua evolución y en las que la Commonwealth desempeñaba un papel importante, ofrecían un duro contraste a la imagen común de Churchill, la de un imperialista rígido y tradicional.



Resumen

During the first two years of the Second World War, and out of abject necessity, Churchill isolated Britain from Europe. His first tenure as Britain's wartime Prime Minister is enduringly examined, re-visited and re-written. Despite serious ill-health for the majority of his second, peacetime, term as Prime Minister, he remained undimmed by age and his vision of a Europe where each country was free from tyranny and shared democratic ideals became his focus. Churchill described the less fortunate "wide areas" of a post-Second World War Europe as a "quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings". He urged the building of a "kind of United States of Europe" which, working in concert with the United Nations, would prevent a return to the wartime Dark Ages (Churchill, 1948). Whether Britain was to be a nominal member of this European United States, or its leader, was a matter which even Churchill himself could not fully fix upon; not only because "consistency of opinion in a career of that length is hardly to be expected", but also due to the changing political and economic climate which affected Europe, the British Commonwealth, and its world-wide allies (Beloff).

The most obvious time when the Commonwealth impacted on Churchill's Europe was during the world wars – phenomenal episodes in world history where Dominion and Imperial troops played significant roles in the Allied victories. In contrast, this article looks at the extent of the impact the Commonwealth had on Churchill's Europe from his electoral defeat in July 1945 until the end of his second term as Prime Minister (October 1951-April 1955). The decade which spanned 1945-1955 witnessed three major events: the development of the Cold War; the inevitable decline of the British Empire; and the formation of the Commonwealth – occurrences upon which Churchill had a profound effect. This article examines Churchill's post-war vision of Europe, as set-out within a few of his key post-war speeches, and analyses the extent to which the advent of Indian independence affected not only the new Commonwealth, but also whether the post-war Commonwealth as a whole affected Churchill's Europe during his term as peace-time Prime Minister.

It truly was a "crippled, broken world" in which Churchill was living and writing during the early to mid-1920s (Churchill, 1923). Following the Great War, the Europe he had known was scarred both politically and geographically. In an article for the *Saturday Evening Post*,

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published in 1930, Churchill called for the creation of a United States of Europe in which Britain would be “interested and associated, but not absorbed” by it¹. This piece was written at a time when the British Empire was considered to be the largest and strongest of all empires, and when Europe was still recovering from the Great War. The “gathering storm” of the 1930s culminated in the Second World War – a war in which Churchill took the helm – and one which saw a continued, if not greater, contribution from the Dominions and Imperial troops to British and the Allied success. Following his unexpected exit from Downing Street, Churchill settled into the frantic rhythm of combining the literary production of his memoirs, entitled *The Second World War*, with his duty as Leader of the Conservative Party, as well as being the revered “Leader of Humanity” – as depicted in one of David Low’s most memorable cartoons (Low, 1945). It was in the immediate post-war era that the once pink shaded areas on the world map began to show signs of a soon-to-be rapidly reduced British Empire. Churchill’s carefully constructed image as a die-hard imperialist waned in the face of the British Empire’s ever certain decline and as the political temperature dropped from a hot into a Cold War, his attention turned once more to Europe.

Following the end of the Second World War Churchill’s Europe was fragile, yet not broken beyond all repair. It was under the mantle of “leader of humanity” that he gave his often-quoted speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946. He called for the English-speaking peoples to maintain a “fraternal association” in order to combat the threat of the “iron curtain” that had descended “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic”. This fraternal association would help maintain a “new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast”. A third “new war”, Churchill claimed, was not “inevitable”, and Europe’s future peace and security was intertwined with the fraternal association of the English-speaking people as well as the strength and number of the British Empire and Commonwealth (Churchill, 1948, pp. 93-105). Churchill would later speak of how the “larger synthesis” of a Europe united through democratic processes would only survive if it were founded upon “natural” groupings; the main group to which he referred was the “Commonwealth of Nations”. He argued that rather than weaken world organisations, such as the United Nations or a united post-war Europe, the British Commonwealth strengthened such liaisons (Churchill, 1948, p. 200).

By the end of 1946, Churchill’s dedication to the British Empire was tested as Indian independence became an ever-closer and looming certainty. Churchill had a long, complex, and often emotionally charged relationship with India, its Nationalist leaders, and others who believed Indian Independence was necessary². He may have privately pronounced that the forthcoming independence for India was breaking his heart, but he was nonetheless resigned to

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1 Article by Churchill, quoted in Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *An Idea Conquers the World*, London 1953, pp. 162-163. *Saturday Evening Post*, 15 February 1930.

2 See: Arnn, L. (2003). India in recent historiography: Perhaps Churchill believed in real liberation, *Finest Hour: Journal of the Churchill Centre and Societies*, 118 (2003), p. 22-3; Ziegler, P. (1996). *The Transfer of Power in India*. In R. Crosby Kemper (ed.), *Winston Churchill: resolution, defiance, magnanimity, good will*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press; Gopal, S. (1993). *Churchill and India*. In Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *Churchill: A Major New Assessment of his Life in Peace and War* (p. 457-72). Oxford; Bridge, C. (1987). Churchill and Indian Political Freedom, *Indo-British Review*, 13 (2), p. 26-30; M.S. Venkataramani and B.K. Shrivastava, (1993). *Roosevelt-Gandhi-Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India’s Freedom Struggle* New Delhi: Radiant Publishers; Robin James Moore, (1979). *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*. Oxford: OUP.

the situation (AMEL 2/2/4)³. India had been the “jewel” in the British Empire’s crown. It had long been the training ground for the British Army. Of the 469,000 British and Commonwealth combatants (and non-combatants) who served in the Great War’s Gallipoli campaign the Indian force (both combatant and non-combatant) approximated 16,000 (Stanley, 2015, pp. 311-314)⁴. As the Second World War raged, the Indian Army was to become the largest volunteer force ever to have been amassed. India was not only a bastion of resources and manpower whenever imperial and world wars occurred, but also the bridge which spanned the British Empire’s western and eastern limits, and the geographical bulwark against Russian imperial expansionism. With the transfer of power having been completed at midnight on 15 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru announced that while the world slept on that night, India would “wake to life and freedom”. The ensuing horror of Partition, quickly followed by Jinnah’s death and Gandhi’s assassination, meant that Nehru became the cohesive force in Indian politics. The man who had embodied (alongside Gandhi and Jinnah) India’s search for freedom from the “mother country”, and who had been imprisoned for lengthy periods of time during the interwar and Second World War periods, became India’s first Prime Minister. Within a year, the “ticklish business” of whether India should, or indeed could, remain in the Commonwealth was raised (CHUR 2/44/5)⁵.

Albeit somewhat graceless at times, Churchill’s pragmatism over whether the new republic of India should be included in the Commonwealth overrode his emotions. A little over a year later, keeping his gaze firmly fixed on Russia and ever more sure that a united Europe was the key to security, Churchill gave the clearest indication as to how he saw the link between Commonwealth and Europe at the Conservative Party conference in October 1948.

The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking world in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions and the United States play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe. These three majestic circles are co-existent and if they linked together there is no force or combination which could overthrow them or even challenge them. (The Times, 11 October 1948)⁶

3 His resignation to the fact of Indian Independence did not, of course, mean that he was not frustrated by it as when he referred to the British withdrawal from India as a ‘shameful flight’ and ‘hurried scuttle’. See Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 5th Series, vol. 434, cols. 669 & 671 6 March 1947

4 The term Indian Army refers to the British-led Indian Army which comprised British officers, Indian VCOs (Viceroy Commissioned Officers), and Indian file. Figures extrapolated from Peter Stanley, “*Die in Battle, Do Not Despair: The Indians on Gallipoli, 1915* (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd, 2015), Appendix V, pp. 311-14. This is not to mention the contribution that the Indian Army made to the trenches in France and Belgium. See David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers’ Letters, 1914-18* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Chandar S. Sundaram, *Arriving in the Nick of Time: The Indian Corps in France, 1914-15*, *Journal of Defence Studies*, 9/4 (2015); Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Indian Army and the King’s Enemies, 1900-1947* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); Shrabani Basu, *For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front 1914-18* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 31-37; Gordon Corrigan, *Sepoys in the Trenches: The Indian Corps on the Western Front 1914-1915* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006), pp. 39-41; DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S. D. Pradhan (eds), *India and the First World War* (Columbia, Montana: South Asia Books, 1978).

5 Amery reiterated a point made in the official broadcast of the announcement of India’s continuing membership of the Commonwealth (28 April 1949) which stated that, “the traditional capacity of the Commonwealth to strengthen its unity of purpose, while adapting its organisation and procedures to changing circumstances”, see CCAC, CHUR 2/44/15: “Press Notice”, 27 April 1949.

6 Anthony Eden had previously used a similar theme in his conference speech as reported in “Mr Eden’s Three Unities”, *The Times*, 9 October 1948.

Even though Churchill acknowledged American influence in European affairs, especially the Marshall Plan, he appeared equally eager to not diminish Britain's influence over Europe due to the size and strength of her Dominion and Commonwealth subjects⁷. As the question of whether India could, or should, remain in the British Commonwealth still played on, Amery attempted to rally Churchill, not only over the seemingly irretrievable loss of the British Empire but also by accentuating how it was “the flexibility” of the British constitution and the way in which Britain bridged “the gulf between East and West” which could make Britain “the nucleus round which the ultimate world order will crystalise”. Dropping the “British” from the term “British Commonwealth”, so that India felt free to associate herself with the Commonwealth instead of the old and too restrictive imperial ties, occurred before Churchill was Prime Minister for a second time, yet his opinion was still sought (CCAC C. 2., 1949)⁸. “It is our duty to save what we can”, Churchill later wrote, “and one must not be embittered by the past however one may regret it” (CHUR 2/44/8)⁹.

Churchill's reactions to the ever-evolving changing circumstances in post-war Europe were shaped by his own experience, his knowledge of the historical and political problems which Europe had both faced, and the envisaged threats which Europe was about to face. One such threat was the way in which the India/Commonwealth question could possibly further destabilise the security of Commonwealth and Dominions. With the advent of Indian independence came the long-feared domino effect. Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan would all want their own independence but would they want membership on their own terms to the Commonwealth too? Such indecision on matters of Statute, the continuing austerity in Britain under Attlee's post-war Labour government, and the (while invisible to the general public) not-so-special-relationship ripples between Whitehall and Washington over Hydrogen and Nuclear device research, all pointed to a post-war Britain which was not capable of interacting with Europe, let alone leading Europe through the post-war darkness.

At the heart of Churchill's reactions to ever-evolving events and alliances, lay his belief that history was made by great men. Relationships with familiar grand men, with those who had lived during “an age of titans”, clearly continued to be important to Churchill as he continued his post-war quest of “Leader of Humanity” (Maudling, 1978, p. 44)¹⁰. One such man was Robert Menzies who had been Australian Prime Minister from April 1939 until August 1941 and who, like Churchill, had been re-elected for a second tenure from December 1949 until January 1966. Menzies had been privy to listen to a preview of Churchill's 1948 “three rings” speech when, after accidentally bumping into him at a garden party, he was invited to spend

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7 Churchill would later write that the “important campaign for European Unity is of course entirely complimentary to the Marshall Plan policy. It is in fact its unofficial counterpart”. CCAC, CHUR 2-26a-29: Churchill to General Donovan (head of the “American Committee for United Europe”), on the subject of the financial support offered to the “Campaign for European Unity”, May 1949. Along with Monsieur Leon Blum, Signor Alcide de Gasperi and Monsieur Paul-Henri Spaak, Churchill was one of the Presidents of Honour of the European Movement.

8 Amery also revealed that being open-minded regarding India's position acted as encouragement to those countries who might one day wish to join the Commonwealth as “associate members” – such as Norway and Iceland. CCAC, CHUR 2/44/3: Mr H. Spalding to Churchill citing correspondence with the Governor-General of India, Sri Rajagopalachari who wrote that “Mr Churchill's most magnanimous association with His Majesty's Government in this decision is widely and fully appreciated in India, as much as in your own country”.

9 Previously Churchill had written to Amery that they were to “save what we can from this wreck”, see CCAC, CHUR 2/44/7: Churchill to Amery, 26 April 1949.

10 Reginald Maudling, elected as MP for Barnet in 1951, commented that he had “never met...a man cast in the same mould” as Churchill and that the Second World War had been “an age of titans – Bob Menzies, for example, or Smuts”.

time with Churchill in Kent and given “the full Chartwell charm offensive” (Ramsden, 2002). Both men found a sympathetic and agreeable ear in the other; they agreed on how the removal of the word ‘British’ from ‘British Commonwealth’ was the death knell for the Dominions predominance in all Commonwealth matters.

Even if Churchill (or Menzies for that matter) had been in power, there is little to suggest that he would have attempted to reverse the decision; acceptance was the pragmatic and only realistic option as a wider and more inclusive Commonwealth would increase British prestige and power on the world stage – especially in Europe. Often considered to be the precursor to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the Treaty of Brussels had been signed in March 1948 by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and Britain. As the Soviet Blockade highlighted the European need for further security measures to be taken, the Western European Union’s Defence Organisation was formed in late 1948. Britain and her crumbling empire, despite the continuing allegiance of her Dominions, counted for little as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa each had their concern focused upon their own post-war problems. Allowing India to negotiate her own terms regarding her entry and status within the Commonwealth perhaps eased American opinion on the nature of the British overseas – how dogmatic imperialism had changed to a more rational, inclusive, and therefore stronger union. American military weight was seen as vital to world, and in particular European, defence as the Cold War simmered and by April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington.¹¹ Whether a more inclusive Commonwealth would enhance the potential Britain and her Commonwealth could play within NATO may have added an extra depth of pragmatism to Churchill’s acceptance of a modern and inclusive Commonwealth.

Another man to whom Churchill had always paid heed was the South African Jan Christiaan Smuts, who became a loyal friend and confidant. Having passed the bar, Smuts followed a career in politics and was later to become Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 till 1924 and then, like Churchill and Menzies, he returned to the position in 1939 until 1948. Smuts was a powerful and intelligent man who shared the same imperial mindset as Churchill: both men believed in the notion of imperial “duty”, and their right to assert imperial rule over an indigenous population (especially when justified as protecting and guiding the vulnerable and weak) (Bevin, 1950)¹². Although Smuts had originally advocated racial segregation, he later realised that complete segregation was impossible, and he lost the 1948 election to D. F. Malan – a hard-line Afrikaner. Smuts had not only always fervently supported and promoted the British Commonwealth, but also found himself to focus (especially during wartime) on European affairs. Following his electoral defeat, Smuts became more vehement in his views on the proposed new Commonwealth. Pre-empting the announcement which allowed India to “adopt a republican form of constitution” and still “continue her membership of the Commonwealth”, Smuts issued a statement (CHUR 2/44/15)¹³. This “personal view” revealed that Smuts was adamant of there being “no middle course between the Crown and a

11 Members of NATO were: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Britain, America, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

12 Smuts was held in high regard by many. When Ernest Bevin heard Smuts had died, Bevin wrote: “It seems strange to feel that Smuts has passed. I always seem to see him in the Cabinet room or in my office. It was always very encouraging to listen to his profound contributions to world problems. Experience counts a lot”.

13 “Press Notice: Not to be Published, broadcast or used on club tapes in any country until 2.00 hours BST, Thursday, April 28th, 1949”.

republic, between in and out of the Commonwealth". He objected to the devising of terms for special circumstances as he feared that "the whole concept" of the Commonwealth would go and only "a mere name without substance" would remain. "Strike out the King, and the rest disappears", Smuts continued, and it was "the Indian plan" which violated "the very concept of Commonwealth" (The Times, 11 April 1949).

In a note signed "S" and addressed to Churchill, the author précised the Indian Commonwealth plan. Stating how "such an agreement" could not realistically "be opposed", "S" went on to warn not only of the domino effect such an allowance could have, but also how Smuts's opposition could prove problematic:

Once it is established that a Republic can remain within the Commonwealth, the idea will spread. Pakistan will, I expect, be forced to follow suit, though much against its will. South Africa may hesitate if the British element there and the Smuts' party hold out. (CHUR 2/44/19)

Churchill's pragmatism and realism won when faced with such doubt. The harsh light of the Cold War, the strength that an inclusive Commonwealth could provide (as one of his three circles of interlinked power), and the position that this could give Britain in vying for the position as the leading European power. "It is absolutely necessary", wrote Churchill, "for the Conservative Party to have a policy which is not unfavourable to the new India" (Gilbert, 1988, p. 473)¹⁴.

The new India, under its first Prime Minister Nehru, was concerned with building a socialist planned economy (akin to many European countries) and with ratifying its Constitution¹⁵. Although Nehru would later side with Nasser, amongst others, at the Bandung Conference of April 1955 (the precursor to the Non-Alignment Movement of 1961)¹⁶, to not the Korean War meant that the Cold War had, in some respects, already reached Indian shores¹⁷. On 25 June 1950, after several years of increasingly severe incidents of aggression along Korea's division between North and South, the North Korean People's Army (Soviet backed) invaded the Republic of Korea (backed by an American military administration). America invoked the United Nations Charter, and the member states were asked to respond with military assistance. Being members, Britain and the Commonwealth responded: the Far East fleet, two British battalions from Hong Kong, and an Australian battalion from Japan were immediately sent to the area. The Indian 60th Parachute Field Medical Unit was sent to Korea a little later. By July 1951, Canadian, British, Australian, New Zealand and Indian units formed the 1st Commonwealth Division.

Nehru's reservations over India's involvement in the Korean War stemmed from the potential threat that having an American force near a newly Communist China would pose to India; if aggression spilt over, India would be in the middle. Fearful that an increased American presence would tip China into backing Soviet-Korea, Nehru suggested the imposition of a demilitarized zone. While Nehru was acting as intermediary between American, Soviet and

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¹⁴ Churchill to Smuts. Elizabeth Gilliat dictation notes. 3 May 1949.

¹⁵ India's Constitution was made official on 26 January 1950.

¹⁶ The Bandung Conference, 18th April 1955 saw Nehru (India), Nasser (Egypt), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), and Sukarno (Indonesia) all join in their decision to not make alliances with the three world powers (America, Britain, and Russia) and thereby avoid playing a role in the Cold War.

¹⁷ At the Yalta conference of February 1945, Korea had been split in two; by the end of the Second World War North Korea was Soviet occupied, with South Korea being American occupied.

Chinese forces, Churchill returned to Downing Street (Moran, 1966)¹⁸. The modern India, as a member of the Commonwealth, was re-enacting an old imperial tie – it was acting as a brake against Soviet expansionism and threat, albeit in this case the threat from Communist China. Sending Indian units to Korea, to operate alongside their Commonwealth cousins as they had done twice before in the first half of the twentieth century, helped cement the supposed might of the Commonwealth to those who were not part of it – primarily America and Russia. In the aftermath of the Korean War, Indian-American relations deteriorated. Washington had assumed that Nehru would toe the British inspired Commonwealth line yet his actions proved otherwise. The new Commonwealth was an independent force in its own right, and Britain and her Commonwealth were proving their worth in international relations and therefore in being able to lead a post-war Europe into a unified association.

By 1951, with his return to Downing Street and with the publication of the volume of his Second World War memoirs which covered the fall of Singapore, Churchill's reputation in Australia was a double-edged sword. The bluntest edge demonised him and the British wartime Cabinet for having abandoned Australia in their hour of need. John Curtin, the Australian Prime Minister (October 1941-July 1945), and Churchill had entered into a battle of wills. With the unrelenting Japanese advance westwards, Curtin wanted Australian troops in the Mediterranean recalled to protect Australian shores, and deemed the negative answer to be an "inexcusable betrayal". In December 1941, as America entered the war following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Curtin had proclaimed that Australia looked towards America for protection rather than the British Empire – Australia was "free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship" (Curtin, 1941). On 15 February 1942, following the Japanese invasion of Singapore, the island surrendered. Four days later Darwin (on Australia's northern coastline) was severely bombed by the Japanese. Yet the sword's smooth side was that by war's end Curtin and his successors (Frank Forde (6-13 July 1945) and Ben Chifley (July 1945-December 1949)) sought to revive the imperial defence ideal while adding that Australia had a voice which not only deserved to be heard but was, in Curtin's words "more impressive as a member of a family than it could ever be" especially as it was a "separate and distinct entity" (Day, 1992)¹⁹.

While Churchill had worked with Curtin throughout the war, he had formed an altogether more cordial relationship with Curtin's predecessor Robert Menzies (Australia's Prime Minister April 1939-August 1941). In December 1949, Menzies became Australia's Liberal-Country Party Coalition Prime Minister²⁰. Aware of the local repercussions, Menzies offered military support to America on the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 – a move made not only independently of Britain but also before Britain declared its intent. It was under the aegis

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18 When Churchill was asked how he got on with Nehru, after the 1955 meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, he would say that "I get on very well with him. I tell him he has a great role to play as the leader of the Free Asia against Communism". Churchill continued to say that Nehru wanted to undertake this role as "He has a feeling that the Communists are against him and that is apt to change people's opinions".

19 Cited Curtin's speech, 28 February 1945, p. 310.

20 When asked to describe Churchill, Menzies frequently replied "what a boy!". He succinctly elucidated the difficulty Churchill encountered in balancing the needs of the Commonwealth with the needs of Europe: "no man" could "serve two masters" and "hope to devote his thought and power to European balance" as well as the "affairs of the old world". Yet in Churchill, Menzies concluded, such a man existed. Menzies, "Churchill and the Commonwealth", in Marchant (ed.), *Churchill: Servant of Crown and Commonwealth*, p. 91 & p.94. The Churchill/Menzies familiarity continued. Long after his second stint at Downing Street came to an end, Churchill wrote to Menzies and described how he had often reflected upon their "long comradeship" (as well as to thank him for two swans that Menzies had sent to Chartwell to replace those killed by foxes). See CCAC, CHUR 1/59/163: Churchill to Menzies, 7 June 1964.

of Menzies that the ANZUS agreement was signed, and while it was thought to show how separate Australia and New Zealand had become from the Commonwealth, and how they may have swapped one dependency for another, this was not the case²¹. Australia would give military support to British troops throughout the twelve long years of the ‘Malayan Emergency’, and went against American opinion when they offered military assistance to British forces during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Australia’s actions as a Commonwealth force, and by going against American opinion, illustrated how strong the old Dominion ties remained.

Churchill entered into relations with New Zealand in the 1950s aware of the great contribution New Zealand troops had made to both world wars²². Peter Fraser had been New Zealand’s wartime Prime Minister with whom Churchill had worked closely; not without clashes, of course, but ultimately they had a firm foundation of familiarity. As Churchill entered Number 10 in 1951, it was Sydney Holland who was Prime Minister in the farthest flung corner of the Commonwealth²³. It was under Holland that the decision to proceed with shoring-up the prospect of peace in the Pacific was taken in the form of the ANZUS. Yet 1950s New Zealand, under Holland, still wished for a close union with Britain, and so agreed to contribute a division to the British forces stationed in the Middle East to protect British oilfields from the supposed Russian threat. The Cold War, so it seemed, stretched to each corner of the Commonwealth.

Eight Commonwealth Prime Ministers were present at the opening meeting of their 1953 conference in London²⁴. With Stalin’s death in March of that year still sending out reverberations on the nature and intensity of how or whether the Cold War would continue, Churchill attempted to unify the Commonwealth in its efforts to combat such an occurrence. Ironically, while Churchill may have sped-up the process of the Cold War with his “iron curtain” speech of 1946, he was also the man who attempted to thaw the frozen ground. Churchill spoke of how he “felt that if all held together in the anti-Communist front and strengthened their unity no risk would be run”. Such Commonwealth unity would not only act as a bulwark against an escalation of the Cold War but also serve to help the Commonwealth “retain their influence on the policy of the United States” and “carry the United States with them in seeking a period of détente” (Gilbert, 1988, p. 837)²⁵. One example of New Zealand’s show of Commonwealth unity, with the added effect of reiterating how seriously it took American power and opinion in light of ANZUS, was its joining British and Australian forces in fighting the Communist insurgents in Malaya in 1955. Illustrating such tight common bonds between the Commonwealth affected Churchill’s Europe in that it buoyed the prestige of Britain which, although it had lost an Empire, had gained an even larger post-imperial family; one that could almost hold its own in a world-wide context, and one which could likely lead Europe in the Cold War era.

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21 ANZUS was signed on 1 September 1951 and was an assurance of mutual defence in the Pacific between America, Australia and New Zealand.

22 The most contentious and notorious examples of New Zealand troops having played substantial roles in both world wars were: the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915-16, the defence of Crete in 1941, and the battle for Monte Cassino in 1943.

23 Peter Fraser was Prime Minister of New Zealand April 1940-December 1949; and Sydney Holland was PM from December 1949-September 1957.

24 Present at this meeting were: Menzies (Australia); St. Laurent (Canada); Senanayake (Ceylon); Nehru (India); Holland (New Zealand); Mohammed Ali (Pakistan); Huggins (Rhodesia); and Malan (South Africa).

25 W. S. Churchill in his opening address to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference on 3 June 1953.

Although Churchill never travelled to Australia or New Zealand, he did visit Canada²⁶. During his 1929 tour he enthusiastically described Canada as a “vast lush country” that impressed him greatly (Soames, 1999, p. 337). He visited Ottawa in 1952, and again in 1954 – both official meetings were tacked-on to his meetings in America and, as Jenkins observed, the Canadians seemed to be “admirably un-jealous” of this arrangement (Jenkins, 2001, p. 881). The wartime Agreements of Ogdensburg (August 1940) and Hyde Park (April 1941), may have drawn Canada ever-closer to America (in military and economic perspectives), but this did not stop Canada from ignoring either its wartime or post-war ties with the Commonwealth. Canada indirectly contributed to Churchill’s Europe by agreeing to supply Britain with the titanium needed for the production of hydrogen bombs. Having only recently come to the decision that Britain needed its own nuclear devices, and as America were withholding research and material, Churchill asked if the supply was possible when he dined with Louis St. Laurent (the Prime Minister) and C.D. Howe (the Minister of Defence Production) on 29 June 1954. The Canadian Cabinet agreed to the request the next day. While this hasty decision was perhaps due to Canada’s positively enthusiastic pursuance of the Cold War, it certainly illustrated how Commonwealth ties were not incompatible with those of European security.

Commonwealth relations had arguably saved the war-torn face and democratic body of Western Europe. They helped shape Churchill’s pro-special relationship vision of Europe in the 1950s in that the outward unity of their individual actions illustrated that the new Commonwealth was, in its own right, an inclusive and modern organisations which could hold its own against or alongside both America and Russia. Churchill revealed himself to be a true European; where security and democracy took precedence over his earlier incarnation as an imperialist. The legacy of Churchill’s post-war time as “leader of humanity” and his peacetime tenure as Prime Minister was his pragmatism and realism in the face of ever-changing and evolving world-wide alliances. The new Commonwealth was thought to be based upon principles of independence and interdependence. The movement for European Union shared the same principles; each European country to retain its independence yet be interdependent upon each other for security – maintaining democracy and keeping a watchful eye for any form of tyranny. Harold Macmillan clearly saw the way in which the British Commonwealth and the European Movement were allied by these principles of independence and interdependence. When tasked with organising the Dominions Conference of 1951, Macmillan wrote to Churchill and asked him to read Sir Harold Butler’s letter on how the conference was a “serious attempt to reconcile Imperial and European interests in the economic sphere” (CHUR 2/26A-B/63). Macmillan also encouraged Churchill to attend the conference’s opening proceedings so that it “would start under the best auspices” (CHUR 2/26A-B/64). Political unity and an envisaged common destiny were Churchill’s vision for the future of Europe; similar principles to how he had come to view the Commonwealth’s position within the post-war world.

Commonwealth relations had arguably saved the war-torn face and democratic body of Western Europe. They helped shape Churchill’s pro-‘special relationship’ vision of Europe in the 1950s

26 Churchill’s first visit to Canada was in late 1900. As MPs were unpaid, it was necessary for Churchill to build a financial nest-egg so, following his successful election as the Conservative and Unionist MP for Oldham on 1 October, he undertook a lucrative lecture tour in order to “pursue profit not pleasure”. See Churchill to Bourke Cockran, 25 November 1900 in Randolph S. Churchill (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume 1: Part 2, 1896-1900* (London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 1219.

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