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**The Commonwealth of Nations: its Role in the Prevailing of the United Kingdom during The First and Second World Wars**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Acquisition of a  
Magister in British Civilisation**

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*I dedicate this dissertation to my wife and to my little son.*

## **Acknowledgement**

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At first, I simply could not make a clear decision with regard to the main field of interest I would need to focus on, but thanks to my teachers and some of my friends, I finally decided to do some research on the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations.

Many thanks go also to Mr Tegua who really prompted me at exploring this topic further and to all the individuals who willingly gave me some of their precious time and support. Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents and my sister Hamerlain Souâd who was genuinely of much help.

## **Abstract**

The core purpose of this research is to find out more interesting facts about the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations, respectively. We primarily seek to investigate further about the exact role that the free member states used to play both politically and economically and some investigation is also made on the political voice they still have internationally. Another aim is to have a clearer vision with regard to the actual relationship both Great Britain and these free member states actually share. This dissertation lies on a rather more theoretical study than on a pedantic one; it hence focuses on multiple historical data, meaning to solely grasp the various events which contributed to the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations and to its development throughout the past decades. More importantly, we want to make an attempt to analyse the manner through which the Commonwealth of Nations brought further assistance to the United Kingdom for the sake of standing against Nazi Germany during the Second World War (1939-1945) and that helps us a lot to envision how the United Kingdom considered the Commonwealth of Nations at that particular period of time. We additionally look for an objective description of the historical dilemma that Britain went through during that conflict because this country was on the verge of losing the legendary empire it once built across the globe. We wonder which other than the Commonwealth of Nations could have proven its utility to the United Kingdom during that horrific era, part from the remaining allies who were The United States of America, France and the ex-Soviet Union (today known as Russia). This study tells us more regarding the historical relevance of the Commonwealth which was luckily founded a few years before the outbreak of the world's second human tragedy. We mean to end our thesis focusing more on the general outcomes and on the future of the Commonwealth of Nations. In effect, this group of nations used to be a huge empire under British dominance and may in all likelihood become a world partner for other peaceful organisations that target similar goals. Historical guides and other archives are consulted so as to better explore this sensitive topic and naturally, to cope with the chronological evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations. Maps are also of a great help because they allow us to trace back the historical origins of this intergovernmental organisation.

## Résumé

Le but principal de cette recherche est de trouver des faits plus intéressants sur le Royaume-Uni et sur le Commonwealth des Nations. Nous cherchons principalement à étudier davantage le rôle exact que les États membres du Commonwealth ont joué à la fois sur le plan politique et économique. Une recherche est également faite sur l'influence politique qu'ils exercent encore à l'échelle internationale. L'autre objectif est d'avoir une vision plus claire en ce qui concerne la relation réelle que la Grande-Bretagne et ces États membres libres partagent réellement. Cette thèse repose sur une étude plutôt théorique; elle se concentre donc sur de multiples données historiques afin de bien saisir les événements divers qui ont contribué à la création du Commonwealth des Nations et à son développement au cours des dernières décennies. Plus important encore, nous voulons tenter d'analyser comment le Commonwealth des Nations a apporté son aide au Royaume-Uni pour faire face à l'Allemagne nazie pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1939-1945), et cela nous aide beaucoup pour avoir une idée plus claire de la façon dont le Royaume-Uni considérait le Commonwealth des Nations à l'époque. Nous voulons en outre avoir une description objective du dilemme historique que la Grande-Bretagne a traversé pendant ce conflit car ce pays était sur le point de perdre l'empire légendaire qu'il avait bâti à travers le monde. À part le Commonwealth des Nations, nous demandons quelle autre organisation aurait pu démontrer son utilité pour le Royaume-Uni au cours de cette tragédie, en dépit de la présence d'autres alliés qui étaient les États-Unis d'Amérique, la France et l'ex-Union soviétique (aujourd'hui connue sous le nom de Russie). Cette étude nous en dit plus sur la pertinence historique du Commonwealth, qui a été fondée quelques années avant le début de ce deuxième conflit mondial. Nous voulons conclure notre thèse en nous concentrant davantage sur les attentes globales et sur l'avenir du Commonwealth des Nations. En effet, ce groupe de nations était un énorme empire sous la domination britannique et pourrait vraisemblablement devenir un partenaire mondial pour d'autres organisations pacifiques qui visent à atteindre des objectifs similaires. Des guides historiques et d'autres archives sont consultés afin de mieux explorer ce sujet sensible et, naturellement, pour mieux comprendre l'évolution chronologique du Commonwealth des Nations. Les cartes géographiques sont également d'une grande utilité car elles nous permettent de retracer les origines historiques de cette organisation intergouvernementale.

## ملخص

الغرض الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو إيجاد حقائق أكثر إثارة للاهتمام حول المملكة المتحدة ودول الكومنولث. نحن نريد البحث عن الدور الحقيقي الذي لعبته الأعضاء الحرة على المستوى السياسي والاقتصادي. بحثنا كذلك حول الصوت السياسي الذي تملكه هذه البلدان دوليا. الهدف الآخر هو الحصول على فكرة أكثر وضوحا فيما يتعلق بالعلاقة الفعلية المتبادلة بين بريطانيا العظمى والدول الأعضاء. ويستند هذا البحث على دراسة نظرية وبالتالي فإنه يركز على بيانات تاريخية متعددة، وهذا يعيننا لفهم النقاط التي ساهمت في إنشاء الكومنولث وتطوره على مدى العقود الماضية. الأهم من ذلك، نريد أن نستوعب الطريقة التي ساهمت بها هذه الأمم لدعم المملكة المتحدة ضد ألمانيا النازية خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية (1939-1945)، وهذا يساعدنا كثيرا لفحص العلاقة المتبادلة بين المملكة المتحدة ودول الكومنولث في تلك الفترة. ونحن نسعى أيضا لوصف المعضلة التاريخية التي عبرت بها بريطانيا خلال ذلك الصراع لأن هذا البلد كان على وشك فقدان الإمبراطورية الأسطورية التي بناها في جميع أنحاء العالم. بالإضافة لتساءل حول احتمال وجود مسا عد أت أخرى من غير الكومنولث فقد أثبتت هذه المنظمة فائدتها لصالح المملكة المتحدة خلال هذه الفترة الرهيبة رغم مساهمة بقية الحلفاء التي كانت الولايات المتحدة وفرنسا والاتحاد السوفيتي السابق (المعروفة الآن باسم روسيا). هذه الدراسة تخبرنا أيضا عن الأهمية التاريخية لدول الكومنولث، التي تأسست لحسن الحظ قبل سنوات قليلة من بداية المأساة الإنسانية الثانية في العالم. نحن نريد لإنهاء بحثنا بالتركيز أكثر على النتائج الإجمالية ومستقبل دول الكومنولث. في الواقع، كانت هذه المجموعة من الدول إمبراطورية ضخمة تحت الحكم البريطاني، ويمكن أن تصبح شريك عالمي للمنظمات السلمية الأخرى التي تسعى لتحقيق نفس الأهداف. لقد استعملنا أدلة تاريخية وغيرها من المحفوظات لاستكشاف أفضل لهذا الموضوع الحساس، وبطبيعة الحال، لفهم التطور الزمني للكومنولث. البطاقات و الخرائط هي أيضا تساعدنا كثيرا لأنها تسمح لنا لاسترداد الأصول التاريخية لهذه المنظمة الحكومية الدولية.

## **Glossary**

BOG: Board of Governors

CBC: Commonwealth Business Council

CFTC: Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation

CHOGM: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

CMJ: Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association

COMNET-IT: Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development

CPA: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

CYEC: Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

CYP: Commonwealth Youth Programme

EIC/HEIC: East India Company/Honourable East India Company.

ExCo: Executive Committee

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

G20: Group of Twenty

HIPC: Highly Indebted Poor Countries

HIV/AIDS: Human immunodeficiency virus infection/ Acquired immune deficiency syndrome

NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGO: non-governmental organizations

NID: Naval Intelligence Division

PCP: Primary Contact Point

UN: United Nations

U.S.S.R Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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## **Introduction**

It was once said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire" because up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain ruled the largest empire in history and since it was a great nation, Britain was aspiring for a better geostrategic situation and that was enticing enough for expanding its borders as the British became sheer explorers. Indeed, they settled in several regions in the Pacific Ocean as well as in other continents including America, Africa and Asia. This territorial evolution obviously led to the advent of occupation but many years later, those colonised countries were given independence and that was the beginning of the Commonwealth of Nations' era. This group of Nations interests us because we verily believe that such an international organisation enjoys a rich history and that it remains till today, a quite unique selection of fifty three independent nations.

It is clear that the United Kingdom had experienced many changing political and economical environments and these were of a great challenge for its ruling elite. In point of fact, the modern Commonwealth was formed following the decision that was made by the United Kingdom in 1931 as this island country had a wider vision of the new world order it was going to be part of, though it has to be explained that this unifying project was being planned many years before the adoption of the status of Westminster. Part from the United Kingdom itself, the Commonwealth of Nations includes countries such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Cyprus, Malta, Canada, Fiji, Jamaica, Maldives, Malaysia, Mozambique, Rwanda and many intercontinental nations. Moreover, the British government sought to keep peaceful relations with the independent Colonies that used to be part of its colossal Empire in an attempt to develop a common cooperation regarding various political, social, educational and even military aspects.

It is the first association of that kind as it unites countries from different continents and these free members have different languages, creeds and customs; it has to be noted that the Head of this organisation is Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. In this connection, the Commonwealth literally interests us for this organisation represents a strong desire to transcend any given barrier meaning to show support for the member countries when needed, and this is one of the qualities on which we try to focus. The study of the Commonwealth of Nations is quite enriching in terms of information because it gives us a rational overview of the foreign relations and the strategic affairs that used to be run by the British government

after the end of the First World War (1914-1918) and during the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-1945).

We want to eagerly explore this topic intending to learn more about the United Kingdom's political vision and more importantly, we are intrigued to investigate further on the role that was played by the Commonwealth to help and protect the United Kingdom from Nazi Germany since this is the blueprint of our thesis. Besides, authors such as: Alan Booth, Richard Bessel and Lord Casey are highly recommended for further readings. To the best of our knowledge, few studies have been conducted on this issue in Algeria and our target is to find out more on the help that was brought by the colonised to the coloniser.

This topic leads us to consider the following research questions:

-Would the United Kingdom still exist if the free member states did not bring their contribution?

-How did Britain manage to reconstruct itself after the defeat of Nazi Germany?

One hypothesis is that the resistance of the British against Nazi Germany would have been more complicated without the intervention of its allies and the help of its Commonwealth partners. In fact, their solidarity and shared values prompted them to envisage military interventions under one flag because during the Second World War (1939-1945), the British lacked military power, as compared to the Germans. We assume that the existence of the United Kingdom would have been jeopardised because its population would have been forced to exile towards an unknown fate. The second hypothesis is that the reconstruction of the United Kingdom is to a great extent linked to the contribution of the Commonwealth countries in the sense that these free member states continued to show their solidarity, even during the years that followed the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) which resulted in the groundbreaking rebirth and success of Britain.

Our thesis is divided into three main chapters which are distinguishable regarding the chronology and the events they deal with. In Chapter one, the objective is to deal with the history of the Royal Navy and the origins of the Commonwealth of Nations that can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We also intend to shed more light on the will of the British to create such an organisation and since this international association implies collectiveness and dedicated hard work, the cynosure is its Secretariat which is based in the British capital London. Of course, the creation of this international entity permitted to enhance and pacify

diplomatic relations between the British Crown and the remaining free member states and that is dealt with in chapter one. Within the same chapter, our aim is to try to learn about the required conditions (if there are any) that allow interested countries to become permanent members of the Commonwealth of Nations, so as to have a clearer insight about the Commonwealth membership.

Taking into consideration the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations is an emerging association of free and determined countries, we want to take the freedom to mention some vivid examples of the countries that were among the first participants thanks to which the Commonwealth continued to grow in number; our aim is to find out whether the British left a serious legacy within the Commonwealth or not. In chapter two, our goal is to investigate further and learn about the contribution of the Commonwealth because we are eager to know about its nature: was it military, financial or both?

This is in truth the focal point of our study because it helps us have a sort of revisionist retrospective regarding some of the important events that took place between 1939 and 1945. This topic is believed to be as complex as enthralling in terms of data that we want to make it concise to concentrate more on the Commonwealth of Nations and on its role all around the world.

In this regard, our second chapter aims at finding out about the manner the United Kingdom survived during and after the Second World War (1939-1945). We also want to discover more facts on the improvement of life in this country at the end of the war in question. Again, in this chapter, a great importance is given to the reconciliation of the United Kingdom and Germany after 1945 because this is primordial for the understanding of our research. Through the mentioned chapter, our purpose is to shed more light on the United Kingdom and on the Commonwealth, respectively. This encourages us to reflect the international politics of this free association and the drastic changes that it had to adapt to. Chapter two also aims at evaluating the relationship both the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth share in order to analyse its development through the years.

Our intention is naturally to mention some practical examples of the role that is played by this international group of nations in global politics. Likewise, the Commonwealth shares common values and principles with the United Nations, so we endeavor to make a sort of rapprochement between both institutions and of course, we voluntarily want to link this topic with the exchanges that are still occurring between the United Kingdom and the

Commonwealth of Nations as sheer partners, so that we can analyze the British vision even better. While progressing further in our work, it becomes clear that some changes occurred in the Commonwealth of Nations, many years after the adoption of the Westminster Statute of 1931. Chapter three deals with the future role of this international entity and we are interested in studying the latter from 1945 to 1990 in order to fully grasp the evolution that has been sustained by this group of nations.

Although this free association's mission is the promotion of gender equality, world peace, free governance, and democracy, it is useful to note that this organisation is occasionally criticised for its latency regarding the ideals it insistently promotes. Chapter three focuses on the analysis of some past events for comparison in order to depict the nature of the Commonwealth and its relevance in our world. Our last chapter dwells on the positive policy of the Commonwealth and on the challenging circumstances that it has to take into account. On a global perspective, our third chapter helps us to envision the future aspirations of the Commonwealth of Nations as well as the opportunities that may be encountered by such a group of free nations.

In short, we will devote this final chapter to explaining how the Commonwealth grew and the way it managed to bring useful changes to our world. Its various contributions are quoted in an attempt to analyse its political situation, many years after the second major world conflict. We also want to explain that wealth, justice freedom, equality and the development of the free member states is and will remain of paramount importance for this international community and although some of its member countries do not necessarily stick to the aforementioned principles, our priority is to focus on the human experiences the Commonwealth of Nations does convey since many years. Still, within this last chapter, we aim at mentioning the Commonwealth Games; these games are limited to the Commonwealth member's youth coming from at least 70 nations and territories. These are meant to give us an insight about how the Commonwealth of Nations manages its youth's activities and how it promulgates values such as tolerance towards diversity through sport and leisure.

Finally, we have to recall that our decision to concentrate on this particular topic is linked to our great passion for both Germanic and British cultures and we think that this work could be the best opportunity to demonstrate our indefectible interest. In other words, this thesis gathers many intermingled elements that belong to both civilisations. The other general aims of the third chapter are linked to the understanding of the British affairs including the

Commonwealth of Nations because we mean to highlight some of the major achievements of the Commonwealth across the globe. One last goal is to have a clearer idea about the humanitarian activities of the Commonwealth and to be informed about its future economic projects.

**CHAPTER 1 : THE CREATION OF THE**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS**

The Commonwealth of Nations has proven to be one of the most united organizations of our age. In fact, it is its rich cultural diversity that helped its free member states to forge strong ties over the years. Furthermore, this international group of nations shares a quite privileged relationship with the United Kingdom because of the numerous events that took place by the past. Chapter One rests on the general study of this organization as it will focus on its origins and on its progressive development. What is more is that our first chapter describes the importance of the Commonwealth of Nations and conditions allowing countries to adhere to it.

### **1.1. A Brief History of the Royal Navy's Power**

As an island and a world-spanning empire, Great Britain was quite concerned with the fact of imposing its naval superiority on the remaining nations of the world. At the start, the British government was more precisely planning to get rid of the German naval menace which was developing at an unprecedented rate. That was the case before and during the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918) which plunged Europe in a serious turmoil. Currently, it is widely assumed that the British history derives from a quite glorious past, simply because from a chronological point of view, Great Britain had experienced several upheavals and some unstable political as well as economical key changes which hugely contributed to strengthen its global position for so many decades. Although the difficulties which this great nation had gone through were significantly felt by its population, this could not prevent Great Britain from sustaining important prosperity and occupying one-quarter of our planet.

Indeed, modern times do show us that once a nation gains more political weight at an international level, it becomes more greedy and less moderate when it comes to the values it grants to justice and to the freedom of other less powerful countries. This empirical attitude was still being witnessed when the British Empire started to emerge during the European age of discovery<sup>1</sup> which began in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup>European age of discovery: a specific period from 1400 to 1600 in which Europeans travelled the rest of the world in search of goods, raw materials, land, and trade partners. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age\\_of\\_Discovery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Discovery) on April the 8th 2017, at 15:32.



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Regarding this aspect, it may be mentioned that the British Empire was called the empire in which the sun never sets, even though it was the Empire in which blood never actually dried. It was mainly a matter of strength, pride and absolute domination. Many believed in the noble fate of Great Britain because it was maintained that such a people could not only limit its own to live in a small and isolated island without aspiring for creating new possibilities in different parts of the world.

To put it differently, the British elite of that epic era firmly believed in the moral ability of their missionaries and adventurers to go and also to meet with aborigines aiming at civilising them and eventually helping them to sustain a supposedly better life. Nevertheless, the British Imperial hegemony was ruthless and it ruled the oceanic waves like no other empire did before. Most archivists would tell us that the expansion of the British Empire was furthered thanks to commerce and to the free exchange that included various necessary goods. Although this information is partly true, we have to admit that such a tremendous growth was rather more linked to conquests and also to sheer colonisation. In reality, there was a harsh rivalry opposing France and Britain, as both countries used to be the main world super powers by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, if we consider the period following 1600, it is perfectly clear that the British Empire launched additional military conquests which allowed it to take control over various territories in almost each part of the world. The number of these colonies increased even further after the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as Great Britain succeeded to build an entire maritime fleet. In addition to the development of this impressive naval arsenal, these colonies were occupied for a specific reason because each super power was planning to apply different imperial strategies.<sup>2</sup> France, on the one hand, paid the Mughal Empire<sup>3</sup> to fight the British and on the other, Britain had to strike back quickly and that is why it managed to defeat and conquer the Mughal Empire itself. The latter used to be the Northwest zone of modern India and it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the British Empire was effectively at its peak, in terms of military power. Since the British army managed to defeat the Mughal Empire, this broadened the possibilities for the British to exploit the West Indies which were previously a French colony.

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<sup>2</sup>Ph. N. Chakraborti, *Rise and Growth of English East India Company (A Study of British Mercantile Activities in Mughal India)*, Punthi Pustak, 1994, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Mughal Empire: It is self-designated as Gurkani. It was a Persianate empire extending over large parts of the Indian subcontinent and ruled by a dynasty of Mongol and Chagatai-Turkic origin. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire) on April the 10th 2017, at 09:06.

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This could not satisfy their expectations in terms of land acquisition for Great Britain moved southwards to establish its Empire heavily down in Australia. The British wanted more lands and they viewed any other nation as being inferior to theirs, so they continued to fiercely compete with other major European powers in an attempt to enlarge their influence over the African continent as well. History clearly shows us that at that stage, Great Britain was overwhelmingly prompted at taking more lands in Asia and this made her colonise Singapore, back in 1824. Also, in 1840, it was New Zealand's turn to be under British colonisation. Then, the British realised another "tour de force" by acquiring Hong Kong in 1841 as well as the South Pacific area and Burma in 1886.

Many sources would argue that the British Empire was a chance to the world. These claim that the arrival of the British to these regions brought science, technology, art, medicine, prosperity, organisation and above all, civilisation. It is that idea of the 'so British' that we are exploring here. Up to the 1990's, the investments and other human related enhancements were still being felt in countries like India which very certainly carries a pure British legacy within its different institutions.<sup>4</sup> More recently, even in terms of sport for instance, Indians still practice disciplines such as cricket, polo, and football. Furthermore, Great Britain was the world's biggest investment banker and to make sure other malign imperial powers would be kept at bay, the British Crown decided to organise its trade in and all around India.

The Navigation Acts <sup>5</sup> that were adopted between the 1650's and the 1660's allowed the British to close the colonies to foreign trade. Through such acts, it was primordial that all colonial imports enter in the English vessels and that non-English goods pass through England. In a seemingly ceaseless war environment, certain enumerated goods that were brought from America had to be mainly exported via England itself. Obviously, this mercantilism was used by the British in order to score as much profits as possible and also to sustain a visible colonial growth.

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<sup>4</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970*, Penguin Books, 2002, pp 8-10

<sup>5</sup> Navigation Acts: a series of English laws that restricted the use of foreign ships for trade between every country except England. They were first enacted in 1381, and were repealed in 1849. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navigation\\_Acts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navigation_Acts) on April the 10th 2017, at 09:14.

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The British brought however some limitations to this trading system although they eventually encouraged commerce as well as free trade initiatives. Indeed, Great Britain was quite dependent on its trade with Europe and particularly with the southern region of this continent. This globalised commerce created loopholes for the British and it additionally reinforced their influence in the South Asian region.

By 1897, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee <sup>6</sup> and this took her extensive empire to even broader dimensions. It is useful to note that the territorial extent of the British Empire reached 9.5 million square miles, i.e. 2.4 million square kilometres in 1860. <sup>7</sup> This amazing expansion moved afterwards to 12.7 million square miles, i.e. to 3.2 million square kilometres in 1909. Soon after, the British Empire covered approximately 25% of the whole globe. It is crucial to note that this was three times bigger than the French Empire and even ten times bigger than the German one. Such an expansion was not only due to military power as Great Britain made its utmost in order to widen its commercial negotiations and as we have already mentioned above, many countries were invited to accept free trade. There were indeed trade agreements that were signed in association with countries like Morocco, Turkey, Japan, the South Sea Islands, Siam, and even with some other Latin American states.

As a result, the British trade was being managed via extra-European free exchanges and these exchanges reached around 60% in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is why most historians view this period of time as being the full flower of the British Empire's development. This kind of commerce significantly benefited Great Britain because the Crown had been able to make huge margins, thanks to its overseas trading possessions and to its shipping insurances.

Through such a free maritime trade, the British Empire had finally the ability to import much more goods than it exported. The other factor that helped Great Britain to gather more wealth was also the fact that the prices of both export and import were respectively suiting its economy between 1870 and 1914.

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<sup>6</sup> Diamond Jubilee: Originally celebrated on a 75th Anniversary, this changed in Britain, with the 60-year reign of Queen Victoria, which was commemorated as The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and was celebrated on 22 June 1897. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamond\\_jubilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamond_jubilee) on April the 10th 2017, at 09:14.

<sup>7</sup> G. F. Dow & J. H. Edmonds. *The Pirates of the New England Coast 1630–1730*. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1923), pp. 348-350.

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Great Britain was quite interested in Africa as well as in the Asian seas, so the conquest headed towards Borneo, Malaya, New Guinea, as well as to a string of relatively small islands which are located in the Pacific Ocean. This unprecedented expansion allowed the British to possess an entire continent, five hundred promontories, a hundred peninsulas, two thousand rivers, ten thousand islands and one thousand lakes.

Britain was utterly possessed by the opportunity of going farther and may only guess that such an expansion simply goes beyond world's censuses and atlases. Moreover, since the British were deeply convinced that they had the God-given right to rule the world, they assumed their divine mission would be fully sustained through trade and consequently, the British Crown decided to organise its maritime commerce in and around India. Regarding this point, Great Britain decidedly had to keep the monopoly over the imperial holdings that she had acquired after 1600, and in order to achieve this ultimate goal, the British needed to bring together all the different societies that were considered as being the leaders of the East Indian trade.

Great Britain decided to unite and to organise them into one single company. So, this gave birth to The East India Company<sup>8</sup>. The latter brought a second breath to the British maritime commerce. In effect, this united firm started its trade activities in 1702 and many sources claim that at that epoch, it was the very first state-backed company to launch such a free trading system. Under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the East India Company started to do commerce with India and its main exportations were based on Gold, foreign coin and silver.<sup>9</sup> Knowing that precious metals were the main richness a nation could really have at that time, this company made sure this mercantile system would only benefit Great Britain because it had been granted the right to do so by her majesty, Queen Elizabeth I.

Besides, the British monarchy believed that this company would help Great Britain to challenge the Dutch-Portuguese domination over the Indian spice trade. Soon after that period of time, the East India Company started using its trading posts in Bengal and in Madras, as it had received the approbation of the Indian executives.

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<sup>8</sup> Antony Wild, *The East India Company Book of Tea*, Harpercollins, New York, United States, 1995. p.50

<sup>9</sup> A. Wild, *The East India Company: Trade and Conquest from 1600*, The Lyons Press; 1st Lyons Press Edition, United States, 2000, pp. 74-122.

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The East India Company tried to diversify its exportations as well as its importations since it used to trade in tea, various spices, cotton, indigo, saltpetre, silk, several medicines and also in fish. Additionally, it may be noted that the use of cloves and Beer, as well as nutmeg was prominent because both ingredients were much appreciated at that particular time, because they were considered as being a reliable health treatment against toothache, rheumatism and some other sicknesses. Through these multiple maritime trade assets, Great Britain had been able to absorb joblessness in London as the company in question became one of the main labour seekers in southern England. Mostly, various British companies became an industrial empire because they possessed their own dockyards in many English areas such as Blackwall and Deptford.

This Company expanded so much that it eventually managed sawmills, foundries, cordage works, warehouses etc. Unfortunately, the British who sailed to India faced multiple diseases. Indeed, during the period between 1707 and 1775, at least 57% of the employees who went to India for work died because of dangerous illnesses in Bengal. Sadly, this alarming number went even higher in the period between 1747 and 1756 because the employees who died were then estimated to be 74%. As it can be assumed, the long sea journey towards India was still risky for the whole voyage from London to India generally took the British up to 18 months.<sup>10</sup>

This could seem paradoxical but those potential risks did not prevent numerous young British men from embarking to India. The latter were deeply convinced that once they arrive to India, they would become rich very rapidly. Lots of opportunities for wealth were effectively granted from the Mughal authorities when services were offered by the British. Indeed, modern times only prove that history keeps on repeating itself as this is how economy is still being run for the time being. The East India Company did not only focus on India because its trade out passed the Indian frontiers to head over China. Effectively, the English East India Company debuted its trade relationships with China in 1699 and by 1715, it strengthened its partnership with China, by settling in Canton. At that time, the Chinese Emperor totally controlled the Chinese trade, so this commerce was mostly limited to Canton.

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<sup>10</sup>James. L, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Little, Brown and Company, United States, 1994, pp. 66-169.

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This exchange was predominantly based on tea and on Chinese lacquered furniture that featured western designs. Some private traders had also put all their efforts in order to attract more customers and also to incite them to buy ivory based products. Those expensive products were hand made by some talented Chinese craftsmen who perfectly knew how to manipulate ivory and some other rare materials. This all led to the growth of the ivory market, then, a great quantity of ivory had been shipped to Canton from India. Finally, it should be added that India had the natural resources needed and that China had the qualified labour that could help the British to exploit all this richness. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and even in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the British became very much attracted by porcelain that sported captivating decorations. These were essentially porcelain objects having Chinese style that were highly demanded in Great Britain. Among these 'Chinoiseries', there were the famous Chinese wallpapers that were very popular amongst the European bourgeoisie. This indicates that the British merchants imposed their presence in each continent, thanks to an unswerving will to conquer.

Moreover, they excelled in strategic distributions and management of wealth. This also shows how quintessential these free commercial exchanges had been for the British Crown, notwithstanding the military conflicts that were continuously challenging the Royal army. In order to analyze the extent of the power that the British used to have in the remote past, we have to look back at history.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the overseas possessions and trading posts that had been controlled by the British from the 16<sup>th</sup> to almost the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries fostered their world dominance and allowed them to rule dominions, colonies, mandates, territories and protectorates too.

Many qualified this imperialism as being opprobrium and judged Great Britain's policy as being oppressive in the sense that it blatantly prevented weaker countries from governing themselves by their own representatives. In fact, the British needed to preserve their power and even though they were at the peak of their world dominance, the British Crown needed to organize its foreign policy in a better way and to do so, it needed a parliament. In other words, Britain desperately sought to form a real union, i.e. a coalition that would strengthen its army worldwide.

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<sup>11</sup>S. GRIMES, *Strategy and War Planning in the British Navy, 1887-1918*. The Boydell Press, Suffolk, 2012, p. 07.

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All over the world, historians generally agree upon the fact that it is complicated for a nation to stand firmly enough against its enemies on its own. Even prior to our modern era, several great empires needed to make reliable alliances in order to resist against various assaults and also to foster their influence on an international level.

As far as our research is concerned and as we have mentioned above, we have to understand that throughout many decades, different overwhelming events took place in Europe. These were mainly successive wars, plagues and inevitable miserable life conditions which terribly weakened the British people. These ghastly events prompted many historians to repeatedly evoke ancient British political alliances, many decades afterwards. However, the fact remains that such jeopardy could not prevent a country such as the United Kingdom from seeking for further military expansions. Moreover, Great Britain urgently needed pecuniary aid so as to increase its raw material production, meaning to develop its local economy and to sustain a more comfortable life for the British People. After the industrial revolution of the 1800's, and more precisely from the 1890's, the Royal Crown envisaged to obtain more money and hence, more power so the British army increasingly deployed its forces offshore, meaning to exploit further natural resources and this allowed countries like Germany to expand even faster, although mainly locally.

Nonetheless, Germany was also trying to conquer more lands in order to impose its presence beyond its own borders, so it decided to launch its armament revolution in order to cope well with the military races that were taking place between most European powers. As a matter of fact, the Anglo-German naval race is still considered as being the key naval battle that opposed both super powers. Hence, it is useful to note that by 1914, Germany and Great Britain withdrew their respective forces from that naval war; as there had been a momentary truce. In addition to that, the German threat that started to be felt in Europe forced Britain to make peace with her main old rivals which were Russia and France. Many European countries feared the spread of the Anglo-German conflict into other regions.

Alas, that awful cataclysm was inevitable as there was so much hatred and even a noticeable jealousy among Europeans. This means that war became more or less a fashionable philosophy at that time, as both Germany and Great Britain were determined to keep control of some other countries. Actually, the First World War lasted from June 1914 to November 1918 and within this timeline, Europe had experienced one of the deadly military clashes ever seen. Those hard times taught the British to what an extent the help of other nations could be



crucial for their survival as prior to this war; the Royal Navy had to rely on its own fleet and also on its own Foreign Intelligence Committee.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.1.1. The Origins of the Commonwealth of Nations

The origins of the Commonwealth of Nations can be traced back to the early nineteenth century when British governments began allowing select British colonies to move towards self-government. In due course, these colonies were given the status of dominions, which not only allowed them to have an internal self-government but also to enjoy independence in their foreign political and economical affairs. The use of the term Commonwealth had first been used by the Earl of Rosebery, who used this appellation in Australia in 1884, referring to the British Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations. Thanks to multiple declarations and to some international agreements, the Commonwealth of Nations was finally created.

Thus, in order not to lose its momentum, an Empire cannot allow itself to adopt a sort of static military attitude and once the First World War was over in 1918, the British perfectly knew that an additional alliance meant more power and logically, more political stability as well as a better military defence.

From this perspective, Great Britain was aware that many of its former dominions obtained their independence following the Imperial Conference of 1926<sup>13</sup> which is better known as the Balfour Declaration, but the latter were still under the British Crown's rule. These dominions included countries like Australia, India, Canada, South Africa, Ceylon, Pakistan, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Here, it should be noted that the Imperial Conference of 1926 gathered the overseas statesmen as well as the British executives and many other political leaders. This event had been held from the 19<sup>th</sup> October to the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1926. The Conference in question was decidedly organised in an attempt to allow the representatives of the countries mentioned above to meet in London. During their successive meetings, these leaders discussed mutual defence strategies and also some major Admiralty issues that started to be recorded within that period of time.

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<sup>12</sup> The Foreign Intelligence Committee was established in 1882 and it evolved into the Naval Intelligence Department in 1887. Their staffs were originally responsible for fleet mobilisation and war plans as well as foreign intelligence collection. Retrieved from : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval\\_Intelligence\\_Department\\_\(Royal\\_Navy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Intelligence_Department_(Royal_Navy)) on April the 10th 2017, at 09:20.



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These discussions additionally focused on the status of both the United Kingdom and the dominions themselves and there were also important discussions about the imperial cooperation as well as various means of communication that both parties could use. The 1926's Conference helped these nations to set new rules regarding the developments that occurred in the colonies, the mandate territories and in the protectorates since 1923. Likewise, some might argue that once these overseas dominions were granted internal self-government, they would take considerable measures of freedom, in terms of foreign relationships. However, these nations partially took place in the first world conflict, even though they initially sought after gaining more independence from Great Britain.

After the First World War (1914-1918), they even participated in the Paris Peace Conference<sup>14</sup> during which the German fleet had surrendered in order to secure the armistice in November 1918.

Thanks to the fact of joining such a decisive conference, these dominions were allowed to become permanent members of the League of Nations.<sup>15</sup> Besides, the League of Nations was founded because the ancient American president Thomas Woodrow Wilson had insisted on its potential utility on the long run. Wilson undoubtedly believed in a sort of "world parliament" that would help rival nations to find peaceful agreements as he hoped this initiated league would contribute to establish ulterior peace treaties. This political will to bring about peace all around the world seeking for a more secure environment was viewed as being probably the main solution these nations could envisage to adopt against those atrocities that were committed in the not so remote past.

Regarding this point, the British vision was even more practical with this wish for peaceful exchanges because the United Kingdom was determined to exploit these fundamental political changes to its advantage and hence, the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations seemed to be an inevitable result-oriented solution for the British since they definitely meant to keep those dominions and colonies without causing further bloodshed.

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<sup>13</sup> The Imperial Conference of 1926 was the seventh Imperial Conference bringing together the prime ministers of the dominions of the British Empire. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1926\\_Imperial\\_Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1926_Imperial_Conference) on April the 11th 2017, at 10:11.

<sup>14</sup> The Paris Peace Conference, also known as Versailles Peace Conference, was the meeting of the Allied victors, following the end of World War I to set the peace terms for the defeated Central Powers following the armistices of 1918. It took place in Paris during 1919 and involved diplomats from more than 32 countries and nationalities. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris\\_Peace\\_Conference,\\_1919](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Peace_Conference,_1919) on April the 11<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 10:13.

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Otherwise, the British Crown would have lost all the territorial greatness it had managed to construct within centuries. Consequently, Leopold S. Amery who was the Secretary of State for the affairs that were linked to the dominions and to the colonies had contributed to organise the Imperial Conference of 1926 and one has to precise that this conference had been under preparation since December 1925.

As he knew that the dominions' views and interests about their future were slightly different from those of the British, he made sure that good relations would be maintained between the British executives and the dominions' statesmen and this explains the reason why the latter conference took place without problems. However, right before this conference debuts, Amery made a declaration to all the Prime Ministers of the Dominions in order to find suitable agreements regarding their exchanges with the British government. Hence, South Africa, the Irish Free State and Canada meant to establish a better status for themselves and for the remaining dominions as their principal goal was to obtain more equality and more freedom for their political choices.

Other countries such as New Zealand, Australia and Newfoundland were rather more dependent on Great Britain so they carried on strengthening their exchanges which were considered as being perfectly stable. This encouraged the British government to organise some significant deals meaning to satisfy all the members that attended the conference in question. As we have already mentioned, the dominions' question was the most complicated part for Great Britain. This matter has been negotiated via an Inter-Imperial and International Committee that was mainly run by Prime Ministers and certain Heads of Delegations.

The reason for this choice was that Amery as well as other British executives were afraid that the problems raised in this conference would give birth to even more tensions and that those agreements they had prepared would not even be signed by other participants.

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<sup>15</sup> David MacIntyre, *The Commonwealth of Nations, Origins and Impact, 1869-1971*, University Of Minnesota Press, Minnesota Archive Editions, 1977, p. 214.

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The Committee's Chairman was Lord Arthur James Balfour; this well-known statesman was famous for his Declaration of November 1917 through which the British government contributed to create a territory for the Jewish community in Palestine. Amery (1953) had even made an official statement about him:

*“Balfour, I knew to be entirely in sympathy with the newer conception of Commonwealth equality, while his immense personal authority wouldn't only hold the Committee together, I felt, the greatest difficulty might have to be encountered”.*<sup>16</sup>

During this conference, those Prime Ministers had long discussions where fundamental principles were vigorously mentioned. Mostly, that meeting was meant to bring a new balance in terms of inner and international relations with Great Britain. In addition, plenty of acts had then been amended; others were rejected simply because such or such member state could not agree with their text. The members of this Committee kept on trying to make a compromise and they eventually decided to draft an agreement that defines the equality between the Dominions and Great Britain.

The final report of this Committee was approved and signed by Lord Balfour, as it was adopted by all the Prime Ministers who were present at that conference but the latter were not in favour of the adoption of a final constitution that would have probably limited their freedom of running politics, the way they intended to do it.

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<sup>16</sup>L.S. Amery. My Political Life: War and Peace 1914-1929. Vol. II, No. II, London 1953, p.12.

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The compromise was not easy to find at all between the British and the dominions but again, the outcome was that Great Britain and all the dominions would be viewed as being perfectly equal. Thus, once an agreement had been found, the Committee's report had been signed by Lord Balfour and was adopted on the 19<sup>th</sup> November. This famous report is more commonly referred to as the Balfour Formula or the Balfour Declaration which stipulated the following:

*“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, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.”<sup>17</sup>*

Through this crucial report, the Committee fully confirmed that Great Britain and the Dominions formed a solid group of self-governing states. The creation of the Commonwealth of Nations marked the end of the British Commonwealth and this decision seemed quite tangible as the foundation of a federation seemed to be utterly impossible, partly due to the geostrategic limits that separated all these nations. Great Britain wanted thus to show that it would not make decisions against the will of these equal and free member states. Moreover, we want to note that this report did not directly mention India because this country had been offered a privileged position in the British Empire, following the Indian Act of 1919.<sup>18</sup> It should also be known that this declaration primarily dealt with the Commonwealth of Nations and that it did not clearly establish the status of the Dominions, which was rather issued in 1931.

Certain communities welcomed such a report then they believed that its content would allow more countries to have an increased autonomy and that there will be less separatist tendencies amongst countries like Canada, South Africa and the Free Irish State. Other traditionalist executives were less positive about the Balfour declaration because they assumed that this report did not bring a new rhetoric and their political argument was that

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<sup>17</sup> Report of Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Imperial Conference, 1926, in: The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1927, p.21-26.

<sup>18</sup> The Indian Act of 1919 was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It was passed to expand participation of Indians in the government of India. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government\\_of\\_India\\_Act,\\_1919](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India_Act,_1919) on April the 11<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 10:16.

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theoretically, this report was feasible but in reality, the relations between the British Empire and the dominions were still viewed as being different. It is important to note that this report encountered some punchy critics because many authors pretended that it only promoted the supposedly moral value and the strong unity of the Commonwealth of Nations which eventually resulted in having a less centralised British political influence.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, since the equality of status was advocated as being the pillar of the inter-imperial relations, the members of the Committee that we have mentioned above were relieved to notice that Great Britain would no longer use its military superiority over them. The application of this report faced some administrative complications but this constitutional text had been reinforced and accordingly adopted following the statute of Westminster which was issued on December, the 11<sup>th</sup> 1931. As per some historians, this was a decisive historical turn for the United Kingdom, particularly in the period between the 1930's and the 1940's. In fact, the statute of Westminster was ratified in order to complete the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Following the adoption of this act, Canada and the other dominions were granted more independence in the sense that the latter had gained more control over their own provinces and this dominion government started to enjoy more freedom in managing internal affairs. However, the main decisions were still headed by the British parliament. Additionally, they became equal in status to Great Britain. As a result, the Statute of Westminster contributed to establish new rules. Indeed, after 1931, new laws required the approbation of the dominion's parliaments and the British one. Also, the United Kingdom had no more the right to impose any kind of law on any of its free dominions, but if the dominion in question expressed its consent, this could eventually be applied. Interestingly, the statute of Westminster also made it possible for the dominions to establish laws that would be considered as being extra-territorial.

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<sup>19</sup> F. H. Underhill, *The British Commonwealth: An Experiment in Co-Operation among Nations*, Duke University Press, 1956, p 30.

### 1.1.2. The Urge to Create the Commonwealth of Nations

As we have already mentioned above, the origins of this intergovernmental entity date back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was vital for the British to found such an organisation for the main reason that the United Kingdom was experiencing some political unrest. The British Crown inevitably noticed that it was not only losing ground in America but that its German neighbour was also becoming increasingly threatening. Likewise, we may assume that once Great Britain lost its thirteen American colonies in 1783, it started to envisage protecting what remained from its occupied territories because it surely would not abandon those important lands. Hitherto, it is commonly argued that the British policy makers were talented strategists who were constantly ready to make some compromises to protect their Queen and obviously, their wealth. It is clear that the freedom which the dominions were given was one of the many aftermaths of the First World War (1914-1918).

Therefore, Great Britain needed to set its new goals in order to adapt quickly enough to this fast evolution. In that pivotal moment, the Commonwealth of Nations was hence created with a secretariat to oversee its own business and the British wanted this intergovernmental organisation to have an ethical and moral code, despite the absence of any formal constitution or any kind of international law that could have prevented the spread of the British influence. Besides, the Commonwealth of Nations' member states all agreed to co-operate in order to promote peace, liberty, democracy, racial equality and eventually to put an end to misery and also to abolish any sort of discrimination. These noble values were redefined in the Harare Declaration of 1991<sup>20</sup> which contributed to reinforce gender equity in African countries such as Cameroon, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia and Sierra Leon.

Ever since the Commonwealth of Nations' charter had been officially published, Great Britain as well as the remaining member states of this entity chose to establish an action plan to actively apply these key declarations.<sup>21</sup> We have to note that some of the British who eagerly supported the creation and the growth of the Commonwealth of Nations primarily hoped that their political vision would be shared by most of the other politicians, since they

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<sup>20</sup> The Harare Commonwealth Declaration was a declaration of the Commonwealth of Nations, setting out the Commonwealth's core principles and values, detailing the Commonwealth's membership criteria, and redefining and reinforcing its purpose. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harare\\_Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harare_Declaration) on April the 11th 2017, at 12:06. <sup>21</sup> J. D. B. Miller, *The Commonwealth in the World*, Harvard University Press, 1958, pp. 19-47.

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really hoped that this organisation would grant Great Britain with an even stronger political role internationally. In fact, the foundation of the Commonwealth of Nations may be regarded as an intricate political move, as it was the last chance Great Britain could seize in order to regain the place of pride it had slightly lost. The British were the great winners here for they had managed to strengthen their economy through the Commonwealth of Nation's various activities that contributed significantly to spread and promote the British interests and insights all around the world.

Although certain member states proved to be slightly reluctant to join in, they eventually adhered to the compromises such an organisation required. As we know, one of the disciplines that gather different nations is sport, so the Commonwealth Games have been distinctly created, meaning to organise a kind of Olympic Games that would be limited to the member states themselves. These games take place every four years and only contenders coming from the Commonwealth countries are allowed to take part in them. Some critics pretended that these games were too limited even though most sport institutions do regard such an initiative as being a noble promise i.e. a sort of athletic follow-through which would inculcate the sheer values of the Commonwealth of Nations to the younger individuals, as it will undoubtedly prompt them at training for international competitions.

All these activities and sport events empowered this political entity for the main reason that it continued to develop even faster. Hence, this evolution became more noticeable by 1949, because India gained its long-awaited independence and we should precise that this big country was divided into two wholly independent nations: Pakistan and India. On the basis, both countries were willing to remain in the Commonwealth of Nations but they did not intend to pledge allegiance to the Crown. In order to find a suitable solution to this political confusion, the Commonwealth ministers held a dedicated conference in 1949. The verdict was that sovereign nations were eligible to remain members of the Commonwealth of Nations, without necessarily having to swear allegiance to the British Crown because what mattered most was that a country as big as India would still view the Crown as being the key symbol of the free association of the Commonwealth.

This new philosophy additionally implied the cancelling of the "British" appellation, so that all those free member states' representatives feel that they belong to one great political family. Soon after and more precisely towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many other ex-colonies, mostly African and Asian countries became republics and they eventually joined the Commonwealth of Nations. As far as Africa is concerned, Mozambique was one of the ex-

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colonies that chose to join this political entity in 1995. However, this was not the case for each other freed colony, since some nations finally decided not to stay in this organisation. We have indeed the Irish case, since this crucial member state opted for a withdrawal in 1949 and the other emblematic figure leaving the Commonwealth of Nations in 1961 was South Africa for it was put under pressure by the Commonwealth, so that apartheid would no longer be applied in the aforementioned country.

Pakistan also left the Commonwealth in 1972, even though this country came back to this entity in 1989. Zimbabwe among other African countries also decided to leave the Commonwealth of Nations back in 2003, apparently for the same reasons. However, we do not dispute the importance of the Commonwealth of Nations as an international group because when we read the Commonwealth Charter, we notice that these free member states are quite aware about the changing economic context we are living in nowadays. Our world has definitely become unpredictable in terms of politics and also with regard to global peace and to people's security. Such patterns are really considered as being primordial, as if not the most sought after aspects that a nation wishes to sustain. Indeed, the Commonwealth continuously aspires for equal economic opportunities for all and the true respect of the human rights, as well as the right for security worldwide.

As a matter of fact, the Commonwealth of Nations could be compared to any other intergovernmental force as this entity apparently insists on the development of an effective network for co-operation, seeking to fully exploit the potential that each of its free member states could provide, be it of a human or of a material nature. When investigating further in the Commonwealth of Nations, it also becomes clear for us that this voluntary association promotes a more independent world with its supposedly equal sovereign states that share all the same values of responsibility, good governance and common interests. We may guess that the real strength of the Commonwealth of Nations primarily lies in the combination of its diversity but also in the fact of inheriting a shared language which eventually brought its culture and the rule of law.<sup>22</sup>

Other decisive factors such as a shared history and a similar tradition contributed in creating ties between these free member states and thus, between their peoples. In fact, some historians would argue by stating that the Commonwealth of Nations was also created by a pure concern

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<sup>22</sup> R. Maltby & Peter Quartermaine, *The Commonwealth: A Common Culture?* University of Exeter Press, United Kingdom, 1989, pp. 7-21.



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for the most vulnerable people because many human rights were not being respected in so many countries. In addition to this, the founders of the Commonwealth wanted this entity to be uniquely made to serve as a model and as a trigger off for new friendships and for a growing co-operation between different nations. One other role of the Commonwealth of Nations as an international political entity is the fact of providing policy advice on economic, political as well as on certain social development issues, while delivering technical assistance when needed.

The Commonwealth of Nations does accept the valuable contribution of its vast parliamentary networks. There also exists a co-operation between its society and professional bodies and the latter share the values and principles of the Commonwealth of Nations. The Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles<sup>23</sup> allow us to understand this topic even further, similarly to the Aberdeen Agenda.<sup>24</sup> Hence, the actions of legitimacy, responsiveness and transparency of the Commonwealth of Nations have long been discussed and designed, considering the above mentioned agreements and declarations to suit each member states' needs. Besides, the British Crown was solely required to promote the values of real independence, impartiality, honesty and a fair justice in order to attract those ex-colonies that were reluctant to join in. Part from that, good governance and the fight against systemic and systematic corruption were among the key factors which eventually led to increase the number of these free member states. We may add that the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations was rather more a British idea that transformed from a mere tool of imposing once presence on an international level into a great manner of promoting the British culture, trend of life and even humour or philosophy.

The Commonwealth of Nations also views the conservation of natural ecosystems as being an essential combat, similarly to the eradication of poverty by making real efforts to promote social equity. This international entity was thus founded to bring about a new equilibrium in

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<sup>23</sup> The Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles was a declaration issued by the assembled Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Nations, setting out the core political volunteering values that would form the main part of the Commonwealth's membership criteria. The Declaration was issued in Singapore on 22 January the 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1971 at the conclusion of the first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore\\_Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore_Declaration) on April the 11<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 14:12.

<sup>24</sup> The Aberdeen Agenda provides a set of standards to promote a healthy local democracy as well as good governance. Accessed from: <http://www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/aberdeen-agenda/> on April the 11<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 14:17.

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terms of social resilience, economic growth, democracy and scientific progress. Some specialists may consider the British insistence on creating such a political entity as being an additional proof for the traditional British arrogance, in the sense that such a great nation would not give up easily on its ancient empire but either way, this organisation is still regarded as a real success. In fact, the Commonwealth of Nations targets various economic goals since these free member states look for deploying affordable environment friendly components and technologies such as renewable energy, instead of opting for a risky dumping of toxic and polluting waste.

Geographically, the Commonwealth of Nations is without contest very rich and this is one of the reasons that encouraged Great Britain and its partners to apply environmental laws for the prevention against desertification and erosion. By virtue of these laws, these member states are offered the privilege to access clean water, as well as a better sanitation for their population, in a will to eradicate communicable illnesses. Besides, the Commonwealth of Nations was created to better educate the younger generations and to teach them the value they represent with regard to their country's growth as the Commonwealth of Nations' charter emphasises on gender equality and on women's empowerment. The charter in question promotes understanding, communication and tolerance and the respect of other cultures. The Commonwealth of Nations carries strikingly adequate policies that are made to facilitate the entrepreneurship and the employment for the youth in a will to absorb social isolation and unemployment by providing wherewithal that might be required.

There is of course a need to quench all the member states' needs and in order to sustain that, certain key bodies have been added to the Commonwealth of Nations that include the following: the Steering Committee on Commonwealth Connects, the Standing Committee on Terrorism, the Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sports, Grants Committee of Commonwealth Foundation and finally, the Executive and Accreditation Committees of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors. Mostly, the plethora of objectives remains the same but the strategies, the budget and the human resources differ, according to the difficulties that are encountered. This undisputed sense of goodwill contributed to the raise of the commonwealth's success politically and economically. Another fact is that contrarily to its military past, the United Kingdom seized this opportunity to prove that it will do its utmost to prevent military conflicts from occurring between the free member states.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> W. D., MacIntyre, *The Significance of the Commonwealth. 1965–90*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1991, pp. 47–51.

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Albeit these valuable norms and laws, the Commonwealth remains very Anglo centric in its structure as the Queen is at its Head but it has to be understood that nowadays, the Head of Government Office is responsible for diluting the figurehead of the Queen. As compared to the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations is a real peace promoter thereof interests are linked to global issues such as climate change etc. Yet, this international organisation makes its consensus on a smaller scale and the main criteria for membership requires for any state to share a historic constitutional association with an actual Commonwealth member but certain countries are selected in some exceptional conditions. For instance, new members have to accept the Commonwealth fundamental values and principles that have been issued in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles with the commitment to democracy, fair justice and free elections.

One other major condition is the acceptance of the English language for the negotiations and the establishment of relations with other Commonwealth nations. Above all, the new member states have to acknowledge the Queen Elizabeth II as being the Head of the Commonwealth of Nations.

### **1.1.3. The Work of the Secretariat**

As we have mentioned on many occasions above, the Commonwealth of Nations is a political association of free and equally sovereign countries and the latter are commonly referred to as being voluntary and totally free member states. Hence, similarly to any other world leading organisation, its core value lies in the strong unity of its various members. Since each free member state is supposed to share the same values and principles and that these countries aspire for common goals, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been created and established in London back in 1965. It is therefore considered as being the basis of such a political family. Patricia Scotland, Baroness Scotland of Asthal is the 6th Chief executive and Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations. She is a British barrister who served in the British Government.

She was elected by the heads of governments as well as by foreign ministers and also by other Commonwealth diplomats. Patricia Scotland was elected at the 2015 Commonwealth

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Heads of Government Meeting and she took office on April the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.<sup>26</sup> She is the first woman to become Secretary General of this organisation and she is only allowed to access this position for a maximum of two four year terms. This secretariat holds high-level meetings and some prestigious summits and also important conferences which gather most of the Governments' representatives. We have to consider that the primary mission of this service is to execute plans that have been agreed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

In addition, all the values that we have mentioned above are promoted by this main secretariat. The Commonwealth Secretariat additionally tries to facilitate the co-operation between all the free member states so as to optimise the results of any political or economic negotiation. Occasionally, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) urge the Commonwealth Secretary-General to elaborate a Strategic Plan amongst which they will apply their new rules for each next four years. Moreover, the Commonwealth Secretariat has to issue crucial recommendations and these need to be more group-oriented. This must be done in order to constantly contribute to highlight the positive actions of the Commonwealth of Nations. In fact, this Secretariat has been founded so as to give more priorities to this group's actions within a flexible politics framework.

Through this process, the free member states simply seek for having better results at the level of education, economy or even employment and gender equality. Before the adoption of any new plan, the Secretariat in question needs guidance from the Heads of Government. Furthermore, the Secretary General needs to be consulted, along with the Board of Governors, the senior managers and also with the staff of the Secretariat. Any input from the other organisations which may be linked to the Commonwealth of Nations is often taken into consideration. Basically, when the main representatives meet during a summit, they primarily focus on recommendations following the recent evaluations and some other impact studies. Feedback is quite decisive too for these free member states' representatives frequently discuss different possibilities as to the kind of process they need to adopt the right decisions for the adequate priorities on the required period of time.

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<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patricia\\_Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patricia_Scotland). Accessed on March the 14th 2016, at 21:40.

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Since there are so many points of interest and numerous decisions to make, the (PCP) meetings are crucial in terms of new law agreements. Moreover, the (BoG) which is backed up by the (ExCo) provides useful guidance regularly with regard to the most important choices the Commonwealth Secretariat has to make. Sometimes, the Heads of Government refuse to adopt certain propositions but when it is feasible or regarded as important, new plans are adopted according to the kind of data the Secretariat is provided with. To put it differently, the Commonwealth Secretariat delivers much more possibilities for the member states to express either their political initiatives or their concerns about a given matter. This Secretariat is a supportive branch that allows positively oriented tasks which are merely envisaged to bring about better coordinative plans for the Commonwealth of Nations calls for action.

The Commonwealth Secretariat runs constant evaluation studies to make comparisons each four years. During such a period of time, mandates are improved, member states receive a better support and they are offered the possibility to share more knowledge and also to exchange some marketing techniques. Thus, the countries that belong to the Commonwealth of Nations learn to work with an even better sense of partnership. One major role of this Secretariat is to set even more principles and to make sure there is no violation of the latter in the countries which are included within its strategic plans. We may as well assume that such idealised principles would be hard to apply on a daily basis because rules slightly differ from a country to another. However, it is still very realistic because the Secretariat representatives insist on the organisation of a follow-through to really insure all the agreed values that are enticed in the Commonwealth Charter are adopted. In this respect, we may consider that the Commonwealth Secretariat contributes to reinforce even more the distinctiveness of this group and also the application of the new elaborated laws.

This Secretariat uses a method which consists of learning from past planning and co-operation conditions, since its work represents above all the memberships' numerous needs and goals. The Commonwealth has also become a rather more contemporary organisation that seeks for modern approaches when it comes to security and to peace projects. The representatives of the latter Secretariat perfectly know that they have to respond to the member states' concerns and the priority is always directed towards a collective work between all the included governments. Considering the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations goals may slightly differ throughout the years, its political strategy has to adapt quickly enough to the rapidly changing environment we are living in. In other words, the

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situation may utterly change as far as politics is concerned but the very first aim of the Commonwealth Secretariat remains the same.<sup>27</sup>

It is agreed that it is a value-added feature to this entity. A memorandum has eventually been founded so as to coordinate its work in a more optimised fashion. This also helps these member states to make sure no area is left behind, when a political reform has to be made. Moreover, diversity is of a primary focus amongst the nations that belong to the Commonwealth and everything is actually done to combat racism via useful measures and some practical initiatives which promote racial equality in an effective manner, following the resources that are available. We obviously need to add that each yearly plan requires an envelope of funds and the latter is balanced annually according to specific standards. Similarly to the European Union, during the wake of the world economic crisis, the Commonwealth of Nations, helped by its Secretariat, takes into account the economic hurdles a member state may encounter when planning to continue bringing new contributions.

Amid these long thought plans, the work of each free member state has to be synchronised with each financial year. We have to know that all the resources and the efforts that are made are provided in light of these goals and these are the main points on which the Commonwealth of Nations focuses: Public institutions, democracy, youth, science and social development. In addition, what really constitutes the bedrock of this Secretariat are the four corporate outcomes that are mainly internal ones and these guarantee that this Secretariat will be able to deliver its annual plans successfully and as predicted. More importantly, the latter Secretariat must promote the adoption of the Commonwealth values and principles towards the creation of more efficient and equitable public governments with an increasing promotion for a well-informed and a better educated society.

It has to be considered that the states representatives who help in the making of such decisions have to be fair so that elections reflect the real wish of the member states' representatives and this is partly managed thanks to the independence of these member countries. Again, the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations plays a crucial role in international trade exchanges made some of its member states attend the G20 summit and this goes to show that this is a very elaborated strategy and a long thought project to ensure a long lasting existence among the most powerful nations of the world. Hitherto, climate change has

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/commonwealth-secretariat/> Retrieved on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, at 23:15.

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also been a major topic for these nations to explore and the immense outcomes which are inevitably related to our environment incited the Commonwealth of Nations to invest more money into the creation of intermediate organisations that specialise in the climate change phenomenon and of course, in the protection of nature and in the preservation of certain animal species. It can eventually be understood that the Commonwealth of Nations is a massive international organisation that radiates power in each continent of the planet. There under, we need to analyse even more the branches and multiple sub-branches of this Secretariat. In fact, the Commonwealth Secretariat is structured adequately and according to each mission or division. First, there exists the Commonwealth Secretary-General which is divided into three branches.

Hence, as far as the Deputy Secretary-General is concerned, this department manages the Human Rights issue and its multiple services include the information, Technology and the Conference sections, the General Services Section, the Printing Section, the Finance and Management part, the Human Resources Section, the Permanent Missions to the United Nations and the Joint Office for the Commonwealth of Nations. Amongst its numerous missions, this department has to run the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division and this encompasses the Justice Section, the Criminal Laws Section and also the Law Development Section. Then, we have the Political Affairs Division which missions are directly linked to the Asia/Europe Section, the Caribbean/Pacific Section, the Africa Section, the Good Offices Section as well as the Democracy Section. Furthermore, this department includes the Youth Affairs Division.

The latter's goal is to organise the appropriate contents and events for the South Pacific Centre, the Caribbean Centre, the Africa Centre, the Asia Centre, and for the Pan-Commonwealth Office so that all youth events and sport meetings are well-orchestrated. The Deputy-Secretary-General also runs the Economic Affairs Division and this unit regards Small States, Environment and Economic Management, the International Finance and Capital Markets Section and the International Trade and Regional Cooperation Section. Nevertheless, these are not the only aspects and units this department manages as there is in addition, the Governance and Institutional Development Division that makes key decisions with regard to the Special Programmes Section, the Africa Section, the Caribbean and Mediterranean Sections and also the Asia and Pacific Sections.



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Moreover, the Commonwealth of Nations' Secretariat can rely on its divisions because it adjusts the Health, Gender and Education sections altogether. Last but not least, this department has a Special Advisory Services Division<sup>28</sup> which is a finance-oriented office for it organises and supports the Trade Section, the Economic and Legal Section, the Debt Management Section, the Enterprise and Agriculture Section and it provides experts with Project Support Teams. <sup>29</sup> However, The Secretary General's Office controls the Office of the Secretary-General, the Secretaries-General, the Offices of the Deputy, as well as the Hub and Spokes Project Management Team and the Project Management and Referrals Unit. On the other hand, there is the Communications and Public Affairs Division which manages the Commonwealth of Nations' Website Section, the Publications Section, the Public Affairs Section, the Library Services Section and also the Press and Media Relations Sections. Lastly, this department features the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division and the latter's tasks are related to the Planning Section, to the Evaluation Section and to the Civil Society Section.

The Commonwealth of Nations can also rely on its secretariat to organise sustainable fisheries management, in the framework of the environment's preservation, especially in regions such as Southern Africa because those are countries which communities are heavily dependent on artisan fishing for a living. Furthermore, the Commonwealth of Nations includes the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) and the latter has been created by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh, in October 1997. This rather more recent department was founded in an attempt to promote and raise private investments and to reinforce trade between different private sectors, meaning to remove any administrative barrier that would put their business endeavour into jeopardy. This economic policy was named as: Promoting Shared Prosperity. This decision was made following the Edinburgh Commonwealth Economic Declaration. <sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>The Special Advisory Services Division delivers high quality advisory services to member countries of the Commonwealth. It works in four main areas: debt management, economic and legal services, enterprise and agriculture, and export competitiveness as well as trade development. Accessed from: <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth-in-action/economic-development-2/> on April the 11th 2017, at 15:10.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. M.P., Doxey, *The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Contemporary Commonwealth*. (Houndsmill: Macmillan), 189, pp116-120

<sup>30</sup>The Edinburgh Declaration: a declaration by the heads of government of the Commonwealth of Nations concerning the organisation's membership criteria. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh\\_Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Declaration) on April the 11th 2017, at 15:30.



### 1.2. The Commonwealth of Nations and the British Crown

It may be stated that the Commonwealth of Nations with its global reach is still evolving or that it is continuously looking for solutions to expand further. Our guess is that Queen Elizabeth II probably remains fully convinced about its continuous growth internationally. However, it should be precised that amongst all the member states of the Commonwealth of Nations which share different religions and cultures, no clear conflicts are to be reported and this indicates that the Commonwealth is still relevant after so many decades. Indeed, her highness Queen Elizabeth II is obviously sovereign of the United Kingdom as well as of 15 Commonwealth realms. Above all, we also need to add that she is Head of the Commonwealth of Nations. In reality, the Queen has been reigning on the Commonwealth of Nations during 60 years and as far as this international entity is concerned, the Queen's role is still considered as purely symbolic or ceremonial, in the sense that her figure or presence brings about more unity and comprehension between the free member states in a protocol manner.

Although her presence inside this organisation remains purely nominal, this prestigious role is taken seriously in the sense that she, as well as all the British Crown representatives have latitude in finding suitable approaches whether political or economical, in order to over take any sort of impediments that could endanger their unity.

In order to better understand the relationship that exists between the British Crown and the Commonwealth of Nations, we have to focus on the 1949 London Declaration which has allowed the British Monarch to solely become the symbol and the Head of the free association of the Commonwealth of Nations and this designation has taken effect right after the death of king George VI, the Queen's father. During her Majesty's reign, this international organisation kept on developing as it went from nearly 7 counties to become reinforced with 54 additional free member states to join in.

In fact, Her Majesty's official visits were carried out with Prince Philip to many of these countries since 1952. Here are some examples of such visits that really show the immensity of this realm: on February the 6<sup>th</sup> 1952, the British Queen went to Kenya, in order to visit Sagana Lodge, Kiganjo and that was a crucial moment for her as it was at that moment where she obtained her Accession. Then, she visited Bermuda on November the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> 1953. From November the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> on the same year, she went to Jamaica. Afterwards, it was

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Fiji's turn to be visited on December the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>. From December the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>, Her Majesty visited Tonga. New Zealand welcomed the Queen on December the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1953 and again, on January the 30<sup>th</sup> 1954.

Furthermore, Her Majesty visited Australia (New South Wales (NSW)), Australian Capital Territory on February the 3<sup>rd</sup> and on April the 1<sup>st</sup> in 1954. Still in 1954, she visited Cocos Islands on April the 5<sup>th</sup>. Ceylon was visited from April the 10<sup>th</sup> to April the 21<sup>st</sup>. Aden's turn came on April the 27<sup>th</sup> in 1954. The British Crown had also an important agenda to follow in Africa as well as in some south European regions and that is the reason why Queen Elizabeth II travelled to Uganda for a visit that lasted from April the 28<sup>th</sup> to April the 30<sup>th</sup>, still in the same year. Hence, Malta which is much closer to the United Kingdom in terms of distance was visited from May the 3<sup>rd</sup> to May the 7<sup>th</sup> in 1954. Gibraltar has also been visited by Her Majesty back on May the 10<sup>th</sup>, in 1954. Similarly to her vast empire, the Queen's visits targeted many other countries as she went to Nigeria and she stayed there from January the 28<sup>th</sup> to February the 16<sup>th</sup>, in 1956. Canada (Ontario) saw the Queen step on its port on October the 12<sup>th</sup> 1957 and her visit there lasted until October the 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>31</sup>

She went back there in 1959 and stayed there from June the 18<sup>th</sup> to August the 1<sup>st</sup> for the opening of St. Lawrence Seaway, Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. The Queen went also to India in 1961 and her visit was made between January the 21<sup>st</sup> and February the 1<sup>st</sup>. Meanwhile, from February the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>, she travelled to Pakistan. Her Majesty eventually came back to India that same year on February the 16<sup>th</sup> and she remained there until February the 26<sup>th</sup>. Queen Elizabeth II went again to visit India for only two days, i.e. from March the 1<sup>st</sup> to March the 2<sup>nd</sup>. She made many other official visits to countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Barbados, British Guiana, Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat, Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, The British Virgin Islands (Tortola, Beef Island, Virgin Gorda), Turks and Caicos Islands (Grand Turk, South Caicos), The Bahamas (Nassau), Jamaica and Singapore.

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<sup>31</sup> R. Hardman, *Monarchy: The Royal Family at Work*, Ebury Press, London, 2007, p. 217.

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Thus, these visits included Malaysia, Brunei, Seychelles, Mauritius, Cook Islands because of the opening of the Rarotonga International Airport, Norfolk Island, New Hebrides, The British Solomon Islands (San Cristobal Honiara, Gizo) as well as Hong Kong. In addition, many other conferences were held in Western Samoa (Apia, Tiafau), Papua New Guinea, Tanzania (Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro), Malawi (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Zomba Plateau), Botswana (Gaborone), Sri Lanka (Colombo, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Victoria Dam), Solomon Islands and Nauru. There were also countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu, The Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Belize, Little Inagua Island, St. Kitts-Nevis and finally, Grenada. As we have mentioned earlier, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip accompanied the Queen, Charles, The Prince of Wales and also other members and delegations of the Royal Family.

As a whole, these nations represent a population of about two and a half billion people who clearly constitute an incredibly huge human resource for the latter organisation. We also need to precise that Her Majesty the Queen managed to strengthen the Commonwealth's network basis through frequent visits to all the countries that belong to the Commonwealth realm. For example, some sources mention that the Queen has made about 250 visits to many Commonwealth states. Cameroon was not included because this country only joined the Commonwealth of Nations back in 1995. Rwanda additionally joined this political entity in 2009 which is quite recent, compared to the other free member states. Some analysts add that most of the Queen's visits outside of the United Kingdom took place in the overseas Commonwealth countries.

As we may understand, Elizabeth II did her best to keep regularly in touch with all of the free member states of the Commonwealth because she insisted on having real follow-through operations as to the developments that could occur within the latter organisation and this communication and collaboration was successively sustained thanks to the Commonwealth Secretary-General and to his Secretariat because the main head office is based in London for a closer co-operation between the British Crown and the other counties of the Commonwealth. Moreover, as the Commonwealth of Nations encompasses a vast spectrum of human activities, the Heads of Government organise frequent meetings with the Queen in order to continuously discuss their diplomatic relations and also to communicate on the need to help the poorest countries of this international unity, in an attempt to find suitable solutions for each participant.

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Sceptical historians may regard this as being a passive sort of imperial sway and they tend to argue that these countries' membership causes certain derivative disadvantages. In fact, what should be noted is that the Commonwealth of Nations is about helping its own community. There exists indeed many political actions that are frequently executed by its free member states and within this process; the British Crown has purely a role of moderator when it comes to crucial decisions. Despite this cohesion in work between the whole Commonwealth and its secretariat, there are occasionally certain disagreements because of the sensitivity or the difficulty a given action may include. Also, except for its international activities, we can easily notice that the Commonwealth of Nations is not that popular on the mainstream media and this is one of the reasons why some people may regard these free member states' actions as being barely useful.

As compared to the European Union for instance, the relationship between Great Britain and its ancient colonies can never be the same as the one major European countries share since a few years. It is a completely different matter in terms of both strategy and history. We should add that the Commonwealth of Nations was and still is bringing a certain contribution to world affairs but in nowadays context, this international organisation has to adapt to the twenty first century with the entire changing political scene that the whole world is currently witnessing. The Collaboration between the Commonwealth and the British Crown has to be even more coordinated because now, those long-winded documents have been replaced by new digital data. To be more explicit, both the British Crown and the free member states have to communicate faster about the main issues that retain their interest.

Again, even though some experts tend to argue that the actions which are made by the Commonwealth of Nations are not newsworthy, we have to admit that the latter organism aspires towards a clear projection in improving the living conditions in many less known regions. The Commonwealth of Nations primarily focuses on these nations' youth. Regarding this aspect, the Commonwealth Charter has obviously been drafted down for the next generations in an attempt to sustain peaceful living conditions on the long run for all of them. Furthermore, the British Crown is deeply convinced that poverty is not necessarily linked to low wages or to unemployment but that this problem is rather more caused by a non democratic access to real opportunities whether economic, political, natural, cultural or even social. That is why the British Crown repeatedly encouraged its collaborators to take women's question into consideration as they generally suffer the most from poverty.

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Contrarily to many critics' reports, the Commonwealth of Nations backed by the British Crown is working relentlessly to get rid of this phenomenon by enhancing the capabilities of the African women for example, offering them the chance to ask for their basic rights, similarly to men. Besides, in her clear guidance, Queen Elizabeth II highly recommended optimising women's health and this encompasses women's and young girl's sexual and reproductive freedom. Thus, the British Crown made sure that nutrition and maternal mortality would be regarded as issues of great priority for the Commonwealth Secretariat and similarly to the western world, African women would have the possibility to benefit from sustainable livelihoods quite independently. At this stage, one cannot know for sure whether these missions have been successfully and completely achieved or not but clearly, this approach is very positive in a world that is becoming increasingly globalised economically and even culturally.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout this agenda, the British Crown seeks for the full integration of African women in the multilateral trade that includes other Commonwealth nations. The empowerment of these women will surely broaden gender equality values in such countries as it will add the creation of regulatory work standards so that these women can have their worker's rights as well as their social protection (including health and insurance) and this will also encourage them to found a dedicated network that would gather skilled and professional women who will later be able to create their own organisations to promote trade and economical exchange within their own country. The British Crown also helps these women to have an even better access to productive resources for their market and the Commonwealth manages the provision of various services so as to accompany them in their economical endeavours, namely in fisheries, forestry and also in agriculture as well as in many other economic fields.

To achieve these noble projects, the Commonwealth Secretary is given a specific budget and everything is done so that the spending can be tracked and monitored institutionally. Misery, injustice and gender inequalities are definitely some of the causes of the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS and some other deadly diseases in the Dark Continent. Both the British Queen and the free member states are ever since striving to prove the effectiveness of their role with regard to such issues. Moreover, it should be conceded that the Commonwealth of

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<sup>32</sup><http://www.monarchist.org.uk/the-commonwealth.html>. Retrieved on December the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016, at 08:00.

Nations has a long history in terms of highlighting the issues and other interests of the smaller states and throughout these recent years, Britain encouraged the Commonwealth Secretariat to focus more on these small states, in order to fix their vulnerabilities as far as trade is concerned. It is clear that the United Kingdom does not wish to lose all the institutional patterns it has enshrined within the Commonwealth of Nations.

### **1.2.1. The Main Aims of the Commonwealth of Nations**

As we have mentioned above, the Commonwealth of Nations is an international association of 54 free member states that is based upon a policy of plurality and tolerance. This group of nations roughly exists since 50 years and part from its diplomatic secrecy; it offers interesting opportunities for its members as it contributes to the renewal of their economic status and to sustain their internal security. The self-described families of states represent a distinctive set of ex-colonies and some other non colonised counties that also aim at promoting democracy and human rights. Ever since decolonisation began, both Great Britain and the rest of these nations showed a solid will to build their organisation on the insights of mutual respect and transparent collaboration. Hence, the Commonwealth of Nations may be regarded as the reincarnation of the British Empire but in a redemptive fashion.

Indeed, it can be said now that no other free association is as huge as the Commonwealth of Nations and that the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations has come as a relief for the countries which used to be colonised by the British for this organisation sets them at more or less the same level as Great Britain. Furthermore, the Commonwealth of Nations is a pilot fish for positive foreign relations and bilateral exchanges. The whole world should benefit from such a union because in this age of radical fanaticism, the Commonwealth is enriched by many creeds and religions and it's one of the most notable assets of this international entity. The reasons that may separate some of its members surprisingly allow them to unite and to create tight links between them under one unique flag, the one of the Commonwealth. This constitutes, a force, a sort of united block against any other foreign force that may not share such attributes.

Above all, the feeling of belonging to a great family of free thinkers and pacifists with an official anthem provides these countries with a strong will to grow even more so that the Commonwealth's actions become increasingly noticed and really useful worldwide. The Commonwealth of Nations constantly needs to prioritise its activities, depending on the core

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values it has defended through its famous declarations. The central core values which are unanimously cherished by this international group are: democracy, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and peace. In fact these free member states have no official constitution to adhere to and hence, they have adopted the aforementioned values and principles back in 1971, right after The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles was held in Singapore. From that year onwards, the Commonwealth members had to promote peace worldwide, in an attempt to support the United Nations' actions.

Without any doubt, one of the various bonds of the Commonwealth of Nations is to recognise perfectly the equity of races and cultures, in order to take a stand against racism and discrimination and also to head towards the same goals, meaning to distribute the wealth between these countries with a greater fairness and transparency. It has to be stated that these main objectives were agreed upon following The Harare Declaration of 1991. This one focused on the importance of human equality, democratic ethics and values, sustainable development and the preservation of nature, in addition to human rights but there exists other important issues that are included under this umbrella. More precisely, the Commonwealth of Nations opted for a policy that certain defeatist sources describe as being an "Orwellian" experience<sup>33</sup> or fluctuant according to the prerogatives of the British Crown and above all, to the whim of the Queen herself.<sup>34</sup>

However, a major point can be contemplated here. Indeed, one of the side effects of this partnership is that Great Britain can constantly rely on these countries' support and vice versa. Politically and even militarily, the Commonwealth of Nations has been built upon a strong union, similarly to any other multinational bloc, and the more grown the latter, the safer. In this connection, this counter bloc has always been under the royal patronage of Her Majesty, the Queen Elizabeth II who encouraged pushing back these nations' frontiers to demonstrate the openness of her Empire which used to be less moderate a few years earlier.

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<sup>33</sup>"Orwellian" is an adjective describing a situation, idea, or societal condition that George Orwell identified as being destructive to the welfare of a free and open society. Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orwellian> on April the 12th 2017, at 09:13.

<sup>34</sup> L. James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 511.



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In other words, since our modern world is without contest going through different military conflicts, Her Majesty has to be even more present during the Commonwealth meetings so that she assures a good collaboration between Great Britain and her “back gardens” around the world.

As we have already explained, the Commonwealth of Nations was created in an attempt to reconcile the ex-British colonies, dominions and other protectorates with the United Kingdom and to reconsolidate their cooperative work in terms of politics, foreign affairs and ecology. Even though this union may be regarded as a sheer liability rather than an asset, the Commonwealth aims are as great as the surface it spans. Democracy and election transparency are some of the key terms that are frequently used during official meetings because this is what gathers these free nations. Chiefly, the Commonwealth of Nations has a quite long history and in a sense, the oldest political association of sovereign states has proven that the world was better within a global union rather than off it. Moreover, the values and principles of this free association were first adopted after the Statute of Westminster agreement in 1931.

After the adoption of the latter, the Crown became the symbol of this free membership. Another interesting fact is that the British Commonwealth of Nations of 1921 became quite simply, the “Commonwealth” in 1948. This obviously shows the extent to which the British meant to encourage this union growing further by omitting the word “British” from the association’s name. Then, we should insist on the fact that most of the member states forming this entity belong to a group of countries which shared a particular connection with Britain be it historical or purely economical. From 1949 onwards, the Commonwealth of Nations became more modern in the sense that it had to bring some changes in its political practices. More significantly, it was after the Singapore Declaration of 1971 that the methods of the Commonwealth started to change.

Whilst it is now common for some British to lament that they do not play a major role within this political entity, the goals and objectives of the Commonwealth have never been so clear. The Commonwealth is after all an organisation which is against any policy of “laissez faire” because ever since its creation, Great Britain broadly sought to enter concretely into action and help its partners to run a free trade that used to transit through its maritime docks in London, while applying key measures to make sure some African or Asian countries would not feel too isolated from the rest of this organisation. To continue to exist, the Commonwealth of Nations has to carry on defending its main values and principles. We also



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need to mention that the Commonwealth promotes the freedom of mankind because it encourages each individual to acquire personal liberties regardless of race, culture, colour, gender, political belief and so on.

Thus, it is up to the individuals themselves to frame the democratic society they wish to live in. This policy encompasses no contrived concessions and guarantees personal freedom thanks to the spirit of its community. It has to be added that the Harare Declaration that was issued on October, the 20<sup>th</sup> of 1991 in Zimbabwe was made in an attempt to foster these values and principles. In fact, the Heads of Governments keep on negotiating to find collective agreements in order to strengthen their commitment within their own countries and of course, inside the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly, this policy has to abide worldwide so that the countries that belong to this organism become noticed through their engagement and also thanks to the positive results they achieve socially and economically.

Positively, the youth of these free member states have the chance to study in the other countries that are part of this international organisation and a specific programme of culture exchange has been established so as to promote tolerance and to obliterate any kind of biased behaviour. In this regard and in an attempt to explain further the aims of the Commonwealth of Nations at various levels, the former Secretary General Kamalesh Sharma declared the following:

*“We work as a trusted partner for all Commonwealth people as: a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance; a catalyst for global consensus-building; a source of assistance for sustainable development and poverty eradication.”<sup>35</sup>*

In this line of thought, it can be considered that the Commonwealth is a positive humanitarian force that not only influences world politics but also the daily lives of the member states inhabitants. The Commonwealth Secretariat itself describes its job or mission as being the principal global advocate for the Commonwealth. We may add that The Commonwealth Foundation which helps activists to spread and promote democracy works

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<sup>35</sup>The Role and Future of the Commonwealth: Fourth Report of Session 2012-13, London, 2012, pp. 96-98. See [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk). Accessed on March the 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 10:07.

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hard to develop a cultural understanding between students and hence, between the peoples. In addition, The Commonwealth of Learning promotes the growth of scientific exchanges in a democratised manner while encouraging young students to opt for distance education. In fact, the Commonwealth includes about 100 different associations and some of them belong to the Commonwealth network.

Basically, these certified associations aim at enhancing certain issues such as culture, gender equality, health, land rights etc. Moreover, The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association<sup>36</sup> also manages disability cases, humanitarian relief and trade unions. Another example is the one of the (CMJ) which principal role is to define and develop the administration of law by promoting the judiciary body to be really independent from external pressures. The fact of promoting education in the law is quite crucial as well because the Commonwealth associations insist on the practice of a transparent justice, a fair treatment for the offenders or criminals, so as to decrease criminality rates in the whole Commonwealth. We also need to mention the (CYEC) because this British charity group aims at supporting the youth in becoming active members in society. They teach them to grow up as active global citizens by inviting them to help each other and work in groups so that they share their ideas and different points of view about various topics. Indeed, the Commonwealth of Nations is betting on its diversified youth groups to guarantee a brighter future in the next decades. It can be clearly noticed that most of these projects include education and moral values, to make sure future generations view the Commonwealth's philosophy as a sheer privilege or as a pure legacy rather than an imposed burden. It seems obvious that if the Commonwealth activities were not that flexible, most of its member states would have cut their cloth as they would have easily decided to quit the club. The free member states have to tackle all the problems that could prevent the youth from becoming better individuals.

The role of the Commonwealth of Nations can be viewed as filigree in the sense that each member state tries to contribute with all the resources it can provide for the sake of the community's welfare, even if some issues are more sensitive than others. Mainly, the responsiveness of this international body is appreciated by some peace activists.

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<sup>36</sup>The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), previously known as the Empire Parliamentary Association, is an organisation which works to support good governance, democracy and human rights. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth\\_Parliamentary\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_Parliamentary_Association) on April the 12th 2017, at 09:25.

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Yet, it is delusional to think that the Commonwealth of Nations is the fulcrum of most of the international crisis negotiations as no war can be utterly avoided. Indeed, no final solution can be found for some international conflicts but the Commonwealth continuously devotes its missions to promote peace in an attempt to avoid affecting politics, business, health and education. We have to add that the great openness of the British allowed the creation of the Commonwealth and after all, this democratic spirit came out from a common will to balance international relations as transparently as possible.

One of the challenges that the free member states have to face is to make sure values such as: accountability, mutual respect, transparency, rule of law, legitimacy and responsiveness overcome several decades of political changes. One famous example of the peaceful contribution of the Commonwealth is the work that was done in order to put an end to apartheid in South Africa while insisting on deep notions of humanitarian values and human equality during thirty years. Hence, it is quite obvious that the stance of the member states served as a means to enhance the policy that was applied in South Africa by the whites and many economical as well as military sanctions were hold against this country to push it changing that unfair situation. Besides, in the foreseeable future, the Commonwealth intends to strengthen its fundamental values and principles to continue to prove its worldwide relevance.

In modern times, the Commonwealth of Nations must therefore proceed prudently because any misjudgement with regard to international politics or to the real social conditions of its member states' people might be noxious, as far as its existence is concerned and we assume that this could be the case in particular when we consider the modern international financial stringency. Indeed, the Commonwealth aims not only to spread its philosophy through the English language in order to survive but also to solely sanction recalcitrant rulers who may create obstacles to cooperation. This free association aims also at sharpening its diplomatic influence to become fully efficient.<sup>37</sup> It also works hard so that its positive impacts can be witnessed in as many regions as possible. It primarily continues to attract new members and to assure their all times engagement in an attempt to consolidate its body for the next decades.

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<sup>37</sup>D., Ingram, *Commonwealth for a Colour-Blind World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965), pp. 39-47. & <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth-in-action/good-offices-for-peace/>. Retrieved on March the 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 16:19.

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Finally, this associated club has a congenial vision of the world in the sense that it allows smaller states to rub shoulders with bigger ones. The forthright actions of the Commonwealth benefit its citizens because rules are more flexible and even prisoners have many legal rights which are applied so that these prisoners can reintegrate their community faster. In this regard, the member states of this free organisation condemn any law that ill-treats prisoners because this would mean that no lesson was learned from their colonial past (at least those countries which used to be under British rule) and that some ghastly events could replicate. Thus, The Commonwealth of Nations offers a second chance to its worst citizens. This clearly illustrates the determination of these countries to get rid of any form of discrimination or stigmatisation for the sake of building a more confident Commonwealth.

We also want to consider the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations agreed upon an important statement on disarmament according to which this entity highlighted principles of negotiations to encourage several nations to sign peaceful disarmament procedures. That was a turning point in history for the Commonwealth succeeded to ease tensions between the United States of America and the former Soviet Union and also to avoid any clashes of civilisations between the east and the west.

### **1.2.2. The Conditions to Join the Commonwealth of Nations**

As far as the international conduct of the Commonwealth of Nations is concerned, we know that a grouped action is quite useful to achieve major projects. In the outcome, this international entity continuously saw countries joining its body while others decided to leave it. Here are some of the countries that are now part of the Commonwealth of Nations: Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Zambia, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Cameroon, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Lesotho, Bangladesh, Singapore, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, St Kitts and Nevis, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Cyprus and of course, the United Kingdom.

It has to be noted that most of the countries that joined in had specific criteria to access this membership. In fact, when the British decided to create this free association in the 1940's, the historical context of its birth was complex because before that particular time, Canada had already obtained the right to self-govern itself in the 1840's and it became a dominion in 1867. We also have to recall that the dominion status allowed self-governance and that it

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granted any country having this title with a great independence with regard to foreign exchanges etc. Australia also obtained the same status in 1901. In 1907, it was time for New Zealand to become a dominion, without forgetting South Africa which became a dominion in 1910. Additionally, the Irish Free State obtained the status in question in 1921.

Since these dominions became much more independent on many levels, they viewed Great Britain as being a partner and they did not consider it as a colonizer anymore. More importantly, it was after the Balfour report of 1926<sup>38</sup> that the United Kingdom and the dominions were considered as being equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs. This point is crucial to understand the adhesion of many countries to the Commonwealth of Nations. As we have already mentioned, it was after the adoption of the Statute of Westminster back in 1931 that these dominions became fully independent and this self-determination changed their way of conceiving politics, particularly with the United Kingdom. Besides, the presence of the United Kingdom in almost each continent might have scared these countries but the British envisaged negotiating the withdrawal of their military troops and they decided to peacefully gather all the colonies, dominions and other protectorates under one free union with a unique flag through which these states had to owe allegiance to the Queen.

Naturally, that union would not endanger their sovereignty. Moreover, all the members of the Commonwealth feel that they belong to one family, thanks to their natural connection which has proven to be timeless since 1949. Indeed, they had a more or less common past, they all used the English language because of their colonial past and they all developed a sense of intergovernmental trust and this is what constitutes the force of the Commonwealth, put aside its diversity and its youth. In this insight, agreements on trade, debt and on environment became global and as we have already explained, the creation of this international coalition was an obvious development. Each country leader whom nation belonged to the Commonwealth developed strong bonds with other equal rulers and even with people. We shall additionally note that the membership to this international club requires certain rules without which no country would be allowed to join in.

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<sup>38</sup> The Balfour Declaration of 1926 was issued by the 1926 Imperial Conference of British Empire leaders in London, was named for Lord President of the Council (and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom) Arthur Balfour. It declared the United Kingdom and the Dominions to be autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour\\_Declaration\\_of\\_1926](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1926) on April the 12th 2017, at 09:30.

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In sum, these major rules have strictly been imposed so that to avoid any confusion amongst other member states. These criteria have come from various acts which have been mentioned above.

The most important ones are the Statute of Westminster of 1931, the London Declaration of 1949<sup>39</sup>, the Singapore Declaration of 1971 and the Harare Declaration which dates back to 1991. These crucial documents brought rules that have to be respected by the whole community of the Commonwealth. Any country that aspires for joining the Commonwealth has to be ready to apply democracy and good governance in its policy program and any country's leader who feels reluctant to adopt such rules is not allowed to become a member of the latter entity, unless they change their politics. Our argument builds on the insights of the Edinburgh Declaration of 1997, according to which any new member must be administratively or constitutionally linked to at least one member state.

In addition, to join or to remain in the Commonwealth, each member state, including the United Kingdom has to owe allegiance to the Queen as the Head of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, each member has to respect and adopt the Harare Principles. Here is another factor; each country has to be perfectly sovereign and utterly autonomous. Even though this may be considered as being a sensitive question, all the free members of the Commonwealth have to accept and use English as the language of their communication with the other members of this organisation. Most importantly, no country has the right to join this intergovernmental group if its people does not accept such a membership. As an international free organism, the Commonwealth Secretariat does not wish to limit further the membership conditions as its primary goal is to continue to exist and to achieve this visionary goal, the latter has to promote a policy which features even more openness.

In other words, if a country has no direct bonds with the Commonwealth and wants to join in, its secretariat might consider its membership on a case by case basis.<sup>40</sup> Many member states like Canada, Australia, India and Nigeria share historical links with the United Kingdom but Mozambique had no direct ties with the United Kingdom neither did it have with any other free member state. However, this country was welcomed and accepted by the

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<sup>39</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London\\_Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Declaration). Accessed on November the 8th 2016, at 11:43.

<sup>40</sup> W. David MacIntyre, *A Guide to the Contemporary Commonwealth*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 69.

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Commonwealth community in 1995 under the Edinburgh criteria. Again, this shows us that the Commonwealth is above all planning to expand since many years and more generally, that the idea of belonging to a political family is not a mere metaphor but a real project. Once again, the rapid evolution of the Commonwealth should be considered because the latter emerged from the ashes of the British Empire and challenged many difficulties brilliantly.

Initially, its growth was gradual for it took many decades for some countries to join in. But this organisation eventually reached its Milestone when an increasing number of Asian as well as African countries showed a growing interest in adhering to this political organism. Hence, we have to precise that the conditions that allow countries to become free members of the Commonwealth are not shrouded during fuzzy negotiations or according to some individual's interests. First, the interested country applies an official demand to the Commonwealth Secretariat which is based in the Marlborough House,<sup>41</sup> in London. Then, the Secretariat discusses, accepts or rejects such demands during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Any final decision is made according to their actual agenda. Naturally, with each contender, there are lobbyists and also some political consensus before any new member is admitted.

It has to be considered that although occasional divergences, some countries are held under review; meanwhile a concrete decision is made concerning their new membership. Hence, the Commonwealth of Nations bring vividly to life the will to gather different nations and the selection which is made by its secretariat additionally insures that only committed countries have the eligible right to aspire for a long lasting membership. In a sense, the United Kingdom decided to create this intergovernmental group in a will to preserve its legacy but also to prove that despite its past, it could as well be asked to leave the group it created. We can only guess that this may be one of the reasons that incite more and more countries to envisage the adhesion to such a global union. We cannot know whether these conditions will change but if they do, that could only enhance the image of the Commonwealth internationally.

It can be said hitherto that the Commonwealth membership expanded astonishingly faster as soon as an increasing number of countries became fully independent.

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<sup>41</sup> Marlborough House is a mansion in St James's, City of Westminster north of The Mall and east of St James's Palace and is the headquarters of the Commonwealth of Nations and the seat of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlborough\\_House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlborough_House) on April the 12th 2017, at 09:45.



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Part from the conditions that we have mentioned above, there are some countries which used to be under British rule but these did not end up joining the Commonwealth of Nations.

Indeed, one famous example is the one of Burma and Myanmar. Both countries became independent states in 1947. Although it was at that particular time that the Commonwealth was building up, these countries viewed this organisation as a neo-colonial club that saw the light of the day only to compensate British politicians' ego who were suffering from self-esteem issues, after the loss of their magnificent empire. Similarly, some Middle Eastern countries have not applied for this membership, probably for the same annoying reasons. In fact, the Commonwealth never stopped from evolving while continuing to grow.

Some countries joined it, some others left but eventually, the existence of the Commonwealth has never been threatened by these alterations and many consider this group of nations as being a well balanced example of unity and friendship. The Commonwealth also includes countries that belong to the European Union like: Luxembourg, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Portugal, Latvia and many other countries. This intergovernmental organisation is one of the major as if not the most considerable one worldwide since many decades and again, we need to mention its flexible membership conditions which led to such a prowess.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.3. The Commonwealth of Nations and the Growth of its Members

We should acknowledge that despite the suspension of certain countries and the persistence of certain threats, the Commonwealth successfully managed to sustain its existence throughout the years. In addition to representing a myriad of international flags, this egregious group of 54 member states continued to grow across the world and so did the English language. Actually, and as we have already mentioned, this voluntary group is tangible enough to influence world politics and its widening trade definitely proved its effectiveness in terms of economy. In this particular regard, we have to know that such a union would have never come into being if most of its free member states did not firmly believe that a cooperative relationship would be a safer bet for their common future. Indeed, most of the countries that ended up joining the Commonwealth of Nations decided to take action because

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<sup>42</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries>. Retrieved on November the 7<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 10:12.



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they thought that the other member states were trustworthy, since they were supposed to help and protect each other.

This is not the only factor that contributed to the rapid spread of the Commonwealth ideals as it has to be understood that this international club imposed its own traditions, its different institutions and standards which had to be endorsed by all its community members. On the whole, the Commonwealth of Nations was born to defy the trivial spirit that used to float on some countries and this organization makes lots of efforts to optimize its weakest segments economically, as well as militarily and socially to provide a better life for its citizens. These ideas draw on expanding further and pushing back the cultural barriers and the latter had been set up along the creation of this entity. Moreover, this was a crucial factor thanks to which many countries aspired to join in. Clearly, these free member states are fully engaged in sustaining a long lasting unity.

We already discussed some of the countries that joined the Commonwealth of Nations but let us be more precise as to what specificities these countries bring to the whole group. Since most of these countries used to be under British rule, their citizens generally use the English language in their daily life and so do their governors and/or presidents. Hence, these English-speaking countries are part of an Anglo-sphere because they share a common cultural heritage. This is due to the fact that a great number of these free member states originated from the British Isles which are England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Isle of Man. However, we know that English is rather more used in England and in Wales as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. Thus, the Anglo-sphere is another remaining concept of the British Empire because it includes the United Kingdom itself, Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Indeed Great Britain decided not to give up on the cultural and the political ties that she still shares with these countries and this could potentially explain how the British have been able to continuously attract more members towards the Commonwealth of Nations. Despite some historical tensions, many member states still view this organization as a real chance to belong to a great political family and geo-strategically, the Commonwealth is viewed as a viable solution to prevent military unrest. Besides, the reasons for joining the Commonwealth vary according to the applying countries. More precisely, as multilateralism increased rapidly, many governments showed serious concerns about their durability and stability so they became more conscious about the necessity to adhere to an international organization such as

the Commonwealth. These countries find it interesting to belong to an organism that imposes quiet diplomatic consensus.

In addition, the Commonwealth continued to grow in terms of members because regular meetings are held in many non member states and these states irrevocably become potential members when they hear about the manner through which this international association introduces itself and how it promotes its various activities. Some African and Asian countries view this membership as being a huge opportunity to promote their own culture. As this membership brings certain advantages to these countries, the latter have also some obligations because each year, all the members of the Commonwealth have to contribute financially and this Membership fee is hereafter used to consolidate the whole organization and to help the smaller states in their development. Even if most of the member states make these contributions annually, it has to be stated that some of them are asking for a reduction of costs and also for a better finance management.

As far as our study is concerned, the Commonwealth of Nations represents a fervent freedom defendant and this is a reliable way of selecting additional governments that may align with it and some countries interest us more than others simply because their history with Great Britain is particular in its evolution. Many historians relate about this quick evolution and maintain that the Commonwealth has solid historical roots. Now, it can be assumed that this organization is a changing character that eagerly adapts to the political changes occurring around the world since it is no longer necessary for new member states to share a common past with the United Kingdom. <sup>43</sup>

### **1.3.1. India's Membership in the Commonwealth of Nations**

Geographically as well as historically, India is a huge country which carries a rich history of 30 Centuries of human culture and evolution. Indeed, India is a very attractive country that seduced the British Crown long ago because in addition to its vast reservoir of skilled human capital, India extends to an impressive area of 3, 287, 263, sq km in South Asia. Its beautiful coastline measures 7,520 km and we need to precise that this country encompasses most of the Indian subcontinent which is located around the tropic of Cancer. Moreover, India is listed as the seventh-largest country in the world with a population of over 1.2 billion people. India

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<sup>43</sup>[http://thecommonwealth.org/our-history&http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Commonwealth\\_of\\_Nations\\_membership\\_criteria](http://thecommonwealth.org/our-history&http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Commonwealth_of_Nations_membership_criteria). Accessed on January the 25<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 18:22.

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is also a federal republic which uses a parliamentary system that includes 29 states and 7 union territories. Alone, this country gathers different communities with their numerous languages, dialects and customs. Similarly to the Commonwealth as an organization, this country is multi-ethnic built.

It is indeed an amazing country that promotes the protection of diverse wildlife species as it manages several protected habitats. In its southern region, there is the Indian Ocean and in the south-west, the Arabian Sea covers a total area of about 3,862,000 square km and for a long period, this was the main sea route between Europe and India. Further, the Bay of Bengal is found in the south-east. India is obviously located in an important region as it has neighbouring countries in the West with which it has land borders; the latter include Pakistan, China, Nepal and Bhutan to the north-eastern region and Myanmar (Burma), as well as Bangladesh which is located in the east. In fact, the Indian surface is so colossal that this country is close to Sri Lanka which is located in the Indian Ocean and more precisely, in the south-east of India. Maldives are also near India because the isles in question are located in the south-West.

Thus, the Indian islands Andaman and Nicobar respectively share a maritime border with Indonesia and Thailand. The foregoing remarks show that India is incredibly big and topographically, this south Asian country offers a great variety of plains and mountainous lands as well as many large rivers. Furthermore, India's climate is hot with some regional variations depending on the height of the lands and the western Himalayan region is quite rich in forest vegetation as well. Logically, it would be interesting to understand how India became a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Despite the non-vicinity of India with the United Kingdom and some speculations, it would be erroneous from us to think that India had no major role to play in the Commonwealth. Effectively, India has a key role in terms of decision making as almost all Indian ministers are frequently involved in major decisions regarding sustainable development and environmental protection.

It should be noted that the Commonwealth organizes important meetings with the Indian ministries on sensitive topics such as environment and deforestation, agriculture, water resources, finance, industries, rural development, commerce, non conventional energy sources, health, human resources development and they try to plan commissions on each potential problematic.<sup>44</sup>

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The Indian Ministry of External Affairs has a role of an international political negotiator. India is definitely an important member of the Commonwealth as it coordinates its work with different bodies of the latter. Missions may also vary according to the priorities of the Commonwealth as conventions are signed to combat desertification in India and also to participate concretely to manage demographic dynamics. But in order to better understand the relationship that lies between India and the Commonwealth of Nations, we need to look back at history.

It all started when the British Crown took over direct control of this country from the East India Company thanks to its smart political mislead and military power. India was consequently colonized by the British in 1858. As we know, many powerful countries such as England, France, Portugal, Spain and Holland have eagerly used their financial resources as well as their military force to found many colonies in Asia, in Africa and in the Americas. In addition, North America and Australia were established under military dominance as the native peoples were often persecuted or killed and as we have mentioned earlier, the British regarded those native peoples as subhuman and savage. But in the case of India, this rich country was first coveted for trade opportunities and these prospects led to a foreign domination on its economy. With this colonization, India suffered from oppression, racism and disease.

Thus, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain brought many improvements to the Indian industrial revolution. Unfortunately for India, the British colonization caused misery and weakness to this Asian country and in an attempt to enforce its strength in India, the British introduced the English language in 1835. Surprisingly enough, the Indians quickly learned this language and perfectly adhered to this new educational system. This allowed them to learn about the American colonies and the manner in which Americans united their efforts in 1776 to get rid of the British presence in their lands and become a democracy. Indians also learned a lot about European history.

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<sup>44</sup> S. R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth, 1885-1929 (Studies on modern Asia and Africa)*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1965, p. 125.

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For instance, they discovered how the French people became free after having overthrown their king back in 1789. Inevitably though, the British destroyed the native culture of India and replaced it with their own and they created European Only parks, railroads, clubs, and schools.

This brought segregation amongst the local population and the only Indians who were tolerated at such places were servants. Although all these negative aspects, the British colonization brought positive aspects to India. Indeed, it allowed women to remarry instead of committing suicide and the introduction of the English language contributed to help India to impose itself many years later as an important state in terms of international trade.

Afterwards, an increasing number of Indians became aware about the fact that their Bharat Mata i.e., Mother India should be free, similarly to North America and to France, so they decided to raise hostile actions against Great Britain and this nationalist movement was headed by the famous Mohandas Gandhi.<sup>45</sup>

Unfortunately for the British, conflicts and wars weakened their international influence militarily and this led them to make compromises on their political principles, especially with regard to India. In reality, Great Britain was intending to grant India its freedom because it became obvious after many years of strict rule that the British government grew weary of all the difficulties that were encountered during their imperial rule on this country. Despite this fatality, Great Britain did not only mean to allow the progress of the people of India for she did its best to obtain a great deal through its remaining possessions in the South Asian region. The intentions of the British Crown were not in the least altruistic, in the sense that the British investments that were made in India were spurred by a policy of self-interest. After India's independence in 1947, the United Kingdom expressed its conviction about mutual benefits both countries would gain in joining their respective efforts economically and politically. As a result, India was invited to join the Commonwealth of Nations so as to help Great Britain to invest in infrastructures and to enhance the Indian productivity of various goods.

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<sup>45</sup>Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar (Gujarat) on October the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1869. He was an important spiritual guide in India who defended the Indian independence movement. He was killed on January the 30<sup>th</sup> of 1948. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma\\_Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) on April the 12th 2017, at 11:09.

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This benefited tremendously both India and the United Kingdom for the main reason that both countries became partners sharing mutual respect rather than enemies as they used to be.

Furthermore, these two nations started to envisage creating great wealth and India was growing quickly as a republic so its economy needed to be improved with the help of the British. It was not a symbiotic relationship but a pure political agreement that suited each party. Thus, these two countries knew that they needed to get rid of the shortcomings that represented barriers against their progress. Great Britain used India as a means to safeguard the values of freedom and human rights. We shall also recall that since the London Declaration of 1949 which modernized the Commonwealth, India has played a pivotal role within this political entity. We also need to consider that India decided to join the Commonwealth of Nations on its own in 1948 and soon after, it became a free Republic and such a decision finally influenced other countries to join this organization.

India is really considered as the most important member of the Commonwealth because this country roughly represents 65% of the total population of the latter. Besides, India is among the major financial contributors to the actions and other humanitarian programs of this free association. This key member employs many experts whose primary mission is to bring further assistance to the other members of the Commonwealth encountering difficulties in their development. In fact, India is crucial to the Commonwealth of Nations because it belongs to those English speaking nations which irrevocably share privileged links with the United Kingdom in many fields of interest. India also shares peaceful relationships with other southern countries. This country remains a vivid example for the other developing members of the Commonwealth in the sense that it quickly evolved from its status of colony to become a strong Republic which defends equality and democracy.

There may be some lingering stereotypes about this policy of goodwill with regard to the help which is provided by a country such as India but paradoxically enough, albeit Queen Elizabeth II remains the Head of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom became a simple member, similarly to all the other nations that joined this club. <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/india>. Retrieved on June the 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015, at 21:15

### 1.3.2. New Zealand's Membership in the Commonwealth of Nations

Firstly, New Zealand is an island country which is located in the Pacific Ocean and more precisely, in the southwestern region. New Zealand is also divided into two main parts: the North Island which is locally called Te Ika-a-Māui and the South Island which is additionally called Te Waipounamu. Furthermore, this country comprises other smaller islands. It is interesting to mention that Australia is located at 1,500 kilometers west of New Zealand. This island has some well-known neighbours such as Fiji, Vanuatu New Caledonia and Tonga. It may be stated that New Zealand still has some historical ties with the British Crown but it is now fully independent as it has now its own identity. In fact, between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the United Kingdom greatly influenced the New Zealanders way of life in terms of administration; culture and education for these were submitted to the British standards.

Moreover, New Zealand was militarily linked to Great Britain as its troops fought along the British ones and the latter suffered a lot of casualties because of that and in order to have an idea about this tight relationship between both nations. Here is a statement from Prime Minister Michael Savage (1939) about its own country and Great Britain:

*“I am satisfied that nowhere will the issue be more clearly understood than in New Zealand – where, for almost a century, behind the sure shield of Britain, we have enjoyed and cherished freedom and self-government. Both with gratitude for the past and confidence in the future we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand. We are only a small and young nation, but we march with a union of hearts and souls to a common destiny.”*<sup>47</sup>

We have to add that New Zealand still has friendly relations with countries like the United States of America even though the latter is not a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. This country is additionally a nuclear free zone since 1980 and its army focuses rather more on guaranteeing peace in the surrounding Pacific zone. Despite its geographical isolation, New Zealand is a developed country with its various natural resources and its rich topography. Its two famous cities are Wellington which is its capital city and Auckland. It is clear that New Zealand has a lot to offer since it is a developed economy with its various exports. Besides, New Zealand is a touristic country that attracts many visitors from across the globe. From an economic perspective, New Zealand is a successful nation and its citizens benefit from a reliable health system. The official languages of the New Zealanders are

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<sup>47</sup> M. J. Savage, broadcast address, 5 September 1939, in New Zealand History Online. In <http://xrl.us/bpxot2>, accessed on October the 5<sup>th</sup> 2014, at 22:13.



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English and Maori; education is well managed and the government of New Zealand promotes freedom as well as a better life quality.

Furthermore, we should know that both New Zealand and the United Kingdom share a positive relationship as the Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state of this South Asian country. Indeed, her Majesty is represented by a Governor-General. As far as the government of New Zealand is concerned, the latter entails 11 regional councils and 67 territorial authorities. This country is a free member state of the Commonwealth of Nations since the application of the Westminster act which was signed in 1931 and which granted New Zealand its independence. The Commonwealth views New Zealand as a key member because this country covers an area of: 270,500 square kilometres. Its coastline measures 15,130 kilometres and this is one of the numerous factors that incite tourists to fly to this country. In this regard, we have to add that in Maori, New Zealand is called Aotearoa and this means: the Land of the Long White Cloud.

In terms of trade, New Zealand contributes greatly to the economy of the Commonwealth thanks to its 13 major commercial ports. Some of these ports are located in Whangarei; the latter are used to ship oil products. In Bluff for instance, New Zealand exports aluminium. Hence, the fact of being located within the Pacific ring of fire helped this country to become a successful and powerful member of the Commonwealth of Nations. In addition, New Zealand is rich with its various lakes and fast-flowing rivers and the latter are used as a major source of hydroelectricity. In fact, these lakes alone provide New Zealand with more than 90% of its electric power. Similarly to India, New Zealand is a decisive member of the Commonwealth as it hosted the British Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, South Island back in 1974. In 1990, these games were again hosted by New Zealand in Auckland, North Island.

In addition to that, New Zealand's government as well as the civil society have made huge contributions to the Commonwealth because they helped other developing Asian countries to enhance their quality of life and to make their voice heard during official meetings. This country is definitely a democratic state that is open to other nations' cultures and this is one of the reasons that incited New Zealand to join the Commonwealth of Nations. Erstwhile, this country was one of the overseas possessions of Great Britain and even now, both countries remain linked culturally and institutionally. The government of this country has brought many improvements over the years to make New Zealand a secure place for its citizens and this is one major asset New Zealand could bring to the other members of the Commonwealth to help them sustain a better security management for their countries.



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Indeed, New Zealand is quite aware that such collaborations are necessary. It can be assumed that Thanks to the adhesion of New Zealand, The Commonwealth became stronger on various aspects: culture, tourism, security and social services. Hopefully, New Zealand will be able to contribute even more economically in the next two decades as the Commonwealth continuously needs financial support to be able to apply its agenda worldwide. In fact, the other major members of the Commonwealth such as the United Kingdom and Australia view New Zealand as a crucial member and New Zealanders trust their government and they have no preconceptions about their country's role within the Commonwealth of Nations. This is very important because nothing is as paramount as the fact of building public trust on such political matters. <sup>48</sup>

Thus, the Commonwealth shares coordinated approaches with New Zealand to invest, educate and secure people in building appropriate infrastructures. In this insight, the primary goal here is to sustain a solid leadership from the most developed countries to the weakest members of this international entity. Similarly to some other countries, New Zealand joined the Commonwealth in 1931 for it meant to take a new direction that would map out its rapid growth and allow it to forget about the colonial age. <sup>49</sup> Assertively, the Commonwealth of Nations is beneficial for New Zealand vice versa. We also need to know that despite having good relations with the United Kingdom economically and militarily, New Zealand's currency is the New Zealand dollar. As a matter of fact, New Zealand is a key member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.<sup>50</sup> This country also belongs to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In addition to that, New Zealand takes regularly part in the Pacific Community, the Pacific Islands Forum, as well as the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation.

### 1.3.3. The South African Question and the Commonwealth of Nations

All too often, we hear that South Africa is among the most important free member states of the Commonwealth because this country has a long history of racial wrangling and other

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<sup>48</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/new-zealand>. Accessed on December the 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 at 22:52

<sup>49</sup> Rice, Geoffrey W, ED. *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Edited by Auckland : Oxford University Press, 1992,pp pp. 622-636

<sup>50</sup> Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a forum for 21 Pacific Rim member economies that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific\\_Economic\\_Cooperation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation) on April the 12th 2017, at 11:17.

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political troubles that lead to repetitive grievances. In fact, it should be clarified that certain major points regarding the evolution of such a great nation as history is riddled with similitude and coincidences. South Africa was in majority inhabited by the Bantu groups who came from the eastern and southern African regions. These tribes used to speak four major languages which are the Nguni, the Sotho-Tswana, the Venda and Tsonga. Indeed, the Nguni was by far the most spoken language in South Africa and this language encompassed Zulu, Xhosa and Sawzi communities altogether. Then, European explorers, mainly Dutch farmers and merchants were asked to go there in order to re-provision the ships that belonged to the Dutch East India Company.<sup>51</sup>

These settlers arrived at the Cape in 1652 and in 1688, French Protestant refugees who were commonly known as the Huguenots landed there for the first time and they were joined later on by many settlers who came from, Britain, Belgium, Germany and France. These Europeans had slaves from Indonesia and Malaya and these were entirely at their disposal. One major detail here is that the entire control of the South African Cape was first maintained by the Dutch before it became under French rule and after 1814, it ended under British rule. This Cape was then named the Cape of Good Hope by the European settlers who quickly understood its strategic value. Later, these Europeans and also the multiracial groups started to use the Afrikaans as their local language. This language was hence directly linked to the Boers farmers' culture. Spiritually, these mixed communities rapidly grew as strict Calvinists.

A few years later, they opted for agriculture and ranching because that was adequate for that land as well as for its climate and South Africa became increasingly populated. The white community used to enslave the black one and conflicts between both races continued to create ethnic tensions throughout several years. Afterwards, the British managed to abolish slavery and this incited black people to welcome British missionaries and merchants and the latter were not friendly with the Boers because each community was attracted by the land in question and these conflicts brought agitation amongst Africans themselves.

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<sup>51</sup> The Dutch East India Company was originally established as a chartered company in 1602, when the Dutch government granted it a 21-year monopoly on the Dutch spice trade. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch\\_East\\_India\\_Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_East_India_Company) on April the 12th 2017, at 15:00.

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A few years later, Shaka who was a strategist from Natal invited Zulus to organise an armed group of fighters to impose their presence in the region. South Africa had gone through different crisis in terms of war and the Boers continued to make their presence visible in all the country.

Then, the Boer Republic of the Transvaal was created and this is commonly called the South African Republic; they also founded the Orange Free State. More interestingly, the British were also trying to expand their territory there because Natal became theirs from 1843. Moreover, in 1860 the first Indians came to South Africa so as to work as indentured farmers in Natal when a decisive event took place. Indeed, diamonds were first discovered there in 1867. Thereafter, numerous foreigners coming for both adventure and gold came to South Africa. These new settlers discovered gold in 1871.

Since most of the gold was discovered in what used to be the Boer Republic, the British went on war against the Boers and despite the complication of this mission, the British managed to defeat them. In addition to that military success, Great Britain eventually managed to beat the Zulus who were determined to fight the British fiercely.

That conquest allowed the British to have control over all the South African territories. Great Britain insisted on uniting the four remaining provinces of South Africa in 1910 and that gave birth to the dominion of the Union of South Africa. But in 1931, South Africa gained its independence under the adoption of the Statute of Westminster. Unfortunately, despite its freshly acquired independence, this country did not recognise fundamental rights for the black community and it has to be added that the fact of participating to any vote was utterly forbidden for both Indian and black people.

It should also be considered that India played a key role in this regard because Mahatma Gandhi also went to South Africa and he meant to help both Indians and blacks because he was a young lawyer in 1893.<sup>52</sup> In fact, this imminent personality decided to organise a passive resistance movement in 1906 and thanks to this crucial contribution, the African National Congress was finally created in 1912 and its main goal was to enhance life conditions for the black community and to make their voice heard. Despite this determination, South Africa still did not care about the blacks who were claiming for their basic human rights. Similarly to what took place in the United States of America during slavery, the restrictions of land rights were preventing the black community from owning and using lands or even to live in areas where whites were already establishing their homes.

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From the 1930s onwards, South Africa became famous because of apartheid and in 1948, the National Party<sup>53</sup> accessed to power and this contributed to push other countries to recognise the existence of racial segregation in this country. We have to mention that the National Party did not only include black or Indian people as there were white communists and other pacifists who were denouncing racism against black people. A few years later, this paved the way for the adoption of the Freedom Charter.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup><http://wvpublic.org/post/gandhis-life-lawyer-revealed>. Accessed on April the 12th 2016 at 12:53.

<sup>53</sup> The National Party was a political party in South Africa. It was founded in 1915 and it first became the governing party of the country in 1924. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Party\\_\(South\\_Africa\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Party_(South_Africa)) on April the 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 15:11.

<sup>54</sup>The Freedom Charter was the statement of the core principles of the South African Congress Alliance, which consisted of the African National Congress. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_Charter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Charter) on April the 12th 2017 at 15:22.

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From the 1950s, South Africa adopted additional segregating laws which led to separate whites and blacks in education, public spaces etc. The South African history is veritably littered with racial violence and this situation increased in 1960 as the police acted brutally against protestors. Afterwards, movements of protestation were led by Nelson Mandela who was the head of the military actions and the British viewed this movement as a threat to their stability in the region and they eventually imprisoned Mandella and Walter Sisulu<sup>55</sup> in 1963 in an attempt to prevent any further insurrection and all these events outraged the whole world as many nations were against apartheid. This has left a bitter image on South Africa as the United Nations were warning this county about apartheid in 1961. But as far as the membership of South Africa is concerned, we have to precise that despite all the violence that characterised this country during several years, a general appeasement was witnessed there.

In fact, during the 1980s, the other members of the Commonwealth of Nations helped by the United States of America and by the European Union imposed political, economical as well as cultural sanctions and it has to be recognised that the Commonwealth played a major role in taking action to stop apartheid in South Africa. Indeed, the Commonwealth contributed to get rid of apartheid peacefully via promoting positive and constructive discussions between the communities which were involved in this awful conflict and it was thanks to the Commonwealth that the South African economy took a new breath.

One major detail was also the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 and the final cancelling of the Apartheid laws. The Commonwealth's main concern was that South Africa becomes a country where elections depict the wishes of the people. Besides, the Commonwealth firmly believed that South Africa would remain a key member after the end of apartheid because this country has a lot to offer to this international organisation in terms of human force as well as in terms of natural resources. <sup>56</sup> As regards this aspect, we need to consider that South Africa's economical success has its roots primarily in agriculture and in mining. Yet, despite this economical outcome, this country lacks vital natural resources such as water. South Africa became a member of the Commonwealth because of its gold, platinum, coal, iron ore, chromium, nickel, uranium, diamonds, tin, phosphates, salt, natural gas, vermiculite, zinc, fluorspar, limestone, asbestos, kaolin, silver and gypsum. For the

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<sup>55</sup> Walter Max Ulyate Sisulu (1912-2003) was an African National Congress militant and he used to fight against apartheid in South Africa.

<sup>56</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Cambridge Commonwealth series), Macmillan, 1977, p. 223.

Commonwealth, South Africa contributes industrially thanks to mining and to materials like platinum, gold and chromium which are used for car assembly. South Africa additionally produces chemicals, fertilizers, paper and its derived products as well as tobacco.

### 1.3.4. Australia Joining the Commonwealth of Nations

After being under British rule, Australia also obtained its independence after the adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1931. This country's membership was crucial as it is the largest island in the planet. In addition, we may mention that similarly to New Zealand; Australia carries a British legacy because its official language is English and just like New Zealand uses the New Zealand Dollar, Australia's currency is the Australian Dollar. This country is simply huge geographically as it covers 7,682,395 square kilometres. Furthermore, the Australian coastline measures 25,800 kilometres and its federal capital city is Canberra. Terra Australis used to be the name of this country long ago. Moreover, Australia is located in a strategic area as its neighbours are Papua New Guinea which is further north and New Zealand which is located in the east. The Southern Ocean and Antarctica are located in the southern region.

Australia is also famous for its vast infrastructures and its multiple traffic services that link the east to the west. It is also interesting to mention that Australia is another key member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.<sup>57</sup> In addition, this country is an important member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as well as the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Forum.<sup>58</sup>

Besides, Australia plays a political role within the United Nations and it is an active member in the World Trade Organisation. Part from that, it has to be acknowledged that Australia is a successful nation in terms of industry and agriculture, despite the fact that its central territory is mainly desert. In addition to its various memberships, Australia is quite concerned about climate change and other environmental issues as it suffers from the loss of certain animal and plant species.

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<sup>57</sup>The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian-Ocean\\_Rim\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian-Ocean_Rim_Association) on April the 12th 2017, at 16:06.

<sup>58</sup>The Pacific Islands Forum is an inter-governmental organization that aims to enhance cooperation between the independent countries of the Pacific Ocean. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific\\_Islands\\_Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Islands_Forum) on April the 12th 2017, at 16:17.

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Australia generally opts for agricultural activities in its fertile lands which are located in the south and in the east, i.e. in New South Wales and Victoria. The Commonwealth helps it in that sense but unfortunately, arable lands cover roughly 6% or 7% of the total area of this country. In terms of wild life, Australia is as unique as the species it contains for many typical animals can be found there. For example, flightless birds, cassowaries, Kangaroos, monotremes and marsupials are mostly the animal species which are commonly seen there. Australia contributes to the Commonwealth evolution thanks to its tourism activities and to its spectacular natural environment; its welcoming people promotes a high quality life. This great diversity contributes to its touristic appeal. Regarding this aspect, we should mention the numerous World Heritage sites of Australia.

In effect, Australia is famous for its Uluru-Kata, Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House and the Tjuta National Park. As Australia is one of the world's most multicultural nations, we may assume that this factor helped it to adhere quickly to the Commonwealth values and principles. Economically, Australia is full of potential and it has a lot to offer for this international entity. Australia also helped the other free member states to achieve some of the attainments they were looking for and it remains a good example as far as unemployment and low inflation are concerned. Similarly to some other members, Australia is confident about its future prosperity in the Commonwealth because of its skilled labour and its educational programmes. Australia is naturally useful to the Commonwealth in the sense that it is frequently involved in global projects for peace and security on the long run.

We have to add that Australia was among the first countries which established democracy before the 20<sup>th</sup> century and this country was one of the first to grant women the right to vote. Australia constantly defended values such as the freedom of elections and also the right to be elected. This nation promotes freedom of assembly and political participation. More importantly, Australians respect different religious beliefs and creeds as they also encourage the freedom of speech. The rule of law is a granted standard, just like all the basic human rights that we know and this is the case because the Australian Government inherited many legislative aspects from the British Westminster.

In practice, the Australian history with the Commonwealth is quite rich because this country is very active and strongly engaged with the rest of the Commonwealth members and also with many countries around the world, since this nation is outward-looking, both

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economically and culturally. <sup>59</sup> These enduring ties make it one of the most important free member states of the Commonwealth of Nations. Australia has common strategic interests and economic concerns on which it cooperates with the other countries of this organisation. In this framework of trade liberalisation, Australia apparently seeks for achieving a last longing prosperity with the countries of the Commonwealth and it also endeavours to reduce poverty because it empowers women and encourages them to take active part in the local economy. To be even more active in the Commonwealth financially, Australia plans to reduce its government's debts and to regulate its economy to attract an increasing number of foreign investors. Besides, Australia influences decisions regarding the economical measures that are taken by the Commonwealth of Nations. It should be pointed out that half of Australia's annual aid budget is spent on free humanitarian initiatives and also on various programs that promote peace, gender equality and women empowerment.

Finally, Australia is a stable country which is democratic in its political practices and as we have already mentioned above, this country is culturally diverse and this is a key factor with regard to its Commonwealth membership and inevitably, such criteria has to be followed by other countries which may aspire to become part of the Commonwealth of Nations.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to start our topic and explain how the Commonwealth of Nations was born. This is a primordial part in our thesis because it enlarges the scope of our research and shows the direct link that exists between the ancient British Empire and the emergence of the free member states. It becomes clear that the British expansionism and their interest for trade was the corner stone that led to the foundation of the Commonwealth. Indeed, some of the countries that volunteered to become members of this international association are mentioned in order to highlight the place of pride the latter enjoys since many years. This chapter encourages us to investigate further on the general goals of this group of nations and on the efforts such a membership requires. We additionally want to analyse how this international organisation's policy began to change and for that purpose, the two chapters that will follow will help in enriching our work in relation to the evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations.

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<sup>59</sup> A. Twomey, *The Chameleon Crown: The Queen and Her Australian Governors* (Annandale: Federation Press, 2006), pp. 82-88 & <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/australia>. Retrieved on November the 14<sup>th</sup> 2015, at 15:36.



**CHAPTER 2 : THE ROLE OF THE**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS**  
**DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

The history of the Second World War (1939-1945) interests us since many years and the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations played an important role during that horrific era increases our focus on this issue. This chapter gives us a general insight about the evolution of the Commonwealth during the Second World War (1939-1945) and it also explains the difficulties that were encountered by Britain before its economic recovery which took place after 1945. For that particular purpose, chapter two encapsulates historical evidence to give us more clues about the events that took place within that era in Britain and in Germany.

### **2.1. The United Kingdom between 1930 and 1945**

With the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-1945), the whole world witnessed the most devastating military conflict of human history. In fact, violence reached such a degree that this European quarrel grew internationally. Moreover, this war mobilized a huge number of human and economic resources and this deadly conflict was definitely ferocious towards combatants as well as civilians in the end of the 1930s for 60 million people's lives were brutally taken away. We need to consider that the whole world's economy, politics and social aspects changed radically because of this war. These consequences were simply huge and as far as the United Kingdom is concerned, the Second World War (1939-1945) simply provoked a seismic shift regarding its international influence as its outcome was the direct decline of the British Empire. On the other front, Nazi Germany was relentlessly trying to strengthen its military force because it was determined to rule the world so it joined the axis which also included Italy and Japan.

The allies' camp encompassed the United States of America, France, Great Britain and the ex-soviet union and these countries were deeply concerned about the cadence at which Germany was developing its armament in the 1930s. Great Britain certainly defeated Germany in the First World War (1914-1918) but the plight that resulted from this conflict after 1918 considerably weakened the United Kingdom militarily because a huge number of British soldiers did not end unscathed from it. In effect, thousands of these soldiers perished and others were left severely wounded because of the rough combats they fought against the Germans. Consequently, the British army was considered as inapt to wage further wars and

the British civilians were totally against giving their support for another rearmament program in their country.<sup>1</sup>

First, we have to focus on the Wall Street Crash that took place in 1929. As this crisis plunged the United States into a deep economic depression, many Americans were anxious about their future so they decided to take back their loans which were stocked in other countries and they also decided to stop imports of foreign goods. This was a major turning point in the British history because this depression crossed the Atlantic and spread all over the world and this means that the Commonwealth was also going to be affected by this brutal economic crisis two years before its official foundation. Genuinely, one of the main consequences of this international bankruptcy was the massive unemployment wave that shook the United Kingdom since the number of jobless individuals rose to 2.5 million and back in 1933, this number represented 25% of this country's workforce.

We may also precise that this crisis seriously harmed heavy industries such as the production of steel, iron, coal and shipbuilding. Naturally, this great depression was severely felt in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Northern England and as we have to bear in mind that the British needed to modernize these industries since the end of the First World War in 1918 and that many competitors wanted to lead this industry. This inevitably made many workers become redundant and it literally killed the British industry and it should be known that during the 30s, the United Kingdom's survival seemed to be in jeopardy because the British government did not have a clue about the strategy it would use in order to put the country back on track and anyway, the public viewed the British policy as being utterly useless and inefficient, as far as joblessness was concerned.

Unfortunately for the United Kingdom, poverty was not confined to the rural areas because even the most industrialised zones, except some of them, were living in tough conditions as entire families had to sleep in very small bedrooms and their little houses had no gas or electricity and no running water either. The British depression of 1930 was mostly drowning the country in a deep economical abyss and obviously enough, this crisis increased in 1932 because the British were suffering from hunger and the hard weather conditions made it impossible for some people to survive. It was a period of time that was characterised with anxiety and despair for food was never enough to nourish an entire family and this chronic malnutrition particularly affected the children because they often ended up having severe

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<sup>1</sup>J., Stevenson, *Social History of Britain, British Society 1914-1945*, Penguin Books, 1984, London, pp. 46-54.

pneumonia, rickets and tuberculosis; these children were also struggling with cough, diphtheria and polio. Great Britain was decidedly saddled with massive debts and its survival was endangered by the thousands of unemployed ex-soldiers.

As the situation of the country worsened, the British government decided to take concrete financial measures in an attempt to inject more money in the banks and to enhance money circulation by reducing the interest rates and this eventually helped the British people to be less dependent on debt payments because the latter progressively became able to spend more money. Many acts were signed in order to boost the British economy. Paradoxically, some people living in the southern part of England benefited from this financial crisis as they became more affluent than ever. The principle cause was that prices of various goods decreased during depression and this encouraged an increasing number of British people to purchase secondary items such as luxury furniture among other costly things. In addition, life in the 1930s was above all characterized by the decrease of British families' size.

This allowed these families to have a better life in terms of economics in the sense that they were able to afford working less and obtain paid holidays, at the seaside to forget about the chilly weather of northern England and Scotland. This situation pushed the British government to build roughly three million brand new houses in the 1930s and during this particular period of time, a great number of British citizens started owning cars, perfectly equipped houses with the first TV sets, radios, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and many other necessary products for daily maintenance. Similarly to the United States during depression, the British people became increasingly fond of cinema, swimming baths, dance halls and football matches. Even if this situation might seem totally contradictory, depression was a sheer bliss for the United Kingdom since the average British citizen could afford a suitable diet to keep healthy and to guarantee a better life expectancy.

However, Britain suffered a lot from this changing environment because when Adolf Hitler accessed national power in Germany in January 1933, numerous Jewish and non-Jewish refugees escaped from Germany to forget their horrific life conditions and went to the United Kingdom because they knew Great Britain would protect and help them to hide from the Germans and they also hoped that she would offer them shelter. Unfortunately for most of the refugees, the United Kingdom was exceeded by the unstable situation that its neighbours were going through and it has to be stated that no refugees were favoured over others on the basis of the law of 1919 but the British were strictly supporting themselves first. At that time, people were starving to death and these refugees were promised some money, housing, health

assistance and free education for their children, yet life conditions were quite tense in the United Kingdom and the whole world was on the verge of witnessing a colossal turmoil. In order not to provoke additional tensions with Germany, Great Britain promoted appeasement and reconciliation with her enemy and that simply meant that Germany had the green light to elaborate the plans it wanted without any concession.

Still, in Britain, free school milk was introduced back in 1934. This simply meant that the British were no more ill-fed and that they progressively enjoyed a much better health. On the whole and despite this slight enhancement, daily life in the United Kingdom was still marked by some social difficulties as highly qualified people were unfortunately fated to become jobless so they had to work as domestics to survive. Moreover, it was after 1934 that Great Britain started offering the best work opportunities, as a result of the industrial boom that was witnessed in the south of England and in the midlands. One major detail is that the United Kingdom was more divided than ever in terms of wages and economy. That was the reason why local authorities were trying their best to enhance life conditions of the average British people and this ultimate changing social environment influenced the people's way of thinking.

As to the Second World War (1939-1945), Great Britain felt some guiltiness regarding the manner she treated vanquished Germany after The First World War (1914-1918) and it sought to allow Germany to rebuild itself again. Inevitably then, Germany rearmed itself as it invaded and annexed Austria in March 1938 to the great deception of the British, but nothing could stop the German growth at that particular time because Adolf Hitler mesmerized the German masses who were utterly fascinated by his personality, speeches and also by his unswerving will to conquer other countries and to build a stronger Germany. As Hitler was intending to invade Czechoslovakia and other east-European countries, Great Britain was increasingly concerned with this rapid military evolution and insisted once again on maintaining peaceful exchanges with its German neighbour so that to avoid a second major conflict within Europe.

Adolf Hitler was eagerly planning to annex the southern part of Czechoslovakia to Germany and once he did, he continued his quick ascent by entirely occupying Czechoslovakia back in March 1939 and afterwards, the United Kingdom was determined to change its policy with Nazi Germany for no peaceful arrangements could be maintained any longer. As a result, the British army offered a military support for east-European countries such as Romania and Poland in order to foil Hitler's attacks. In spite of this military support, Nazi Germany

invaded Poland in September 1939.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, German military forces perfectly knew that they had to seize their chance as Great Britain seemed to be weaker than before and at all levels and what is more is that the economical depression of the 30s left a colossal impact on the United Kingdom but even this needy situation did not prevent the British from defending their nation as they were determined not to give up on their freedom.

As Hitler planned for it, Nazi Germany extended its military domination in almost the whole European continent for it controlled many Northern and Western European countries in the mid-1940. Despite the little economic improvements that took place in Great Britain, life slowly became quite uncertain since the public was feeling an increasing panic inside. Furthermore, British people were so stressed-out that any individual having a German accent was potentially viewed as a spy. In fact, militarily, the United Kingdom was under a lingering threat because it was considered by Adolf Hitler as a direct enemy. In this regard, it has to be noted that many Germans and Austrians were imprisoned by the British government and these were called enemy aliens and many of the Nazi German sympathizers were deported to Canada and Australia.

The United Kingdom unsurprisingly declared war on Germany and as Winston Churchill wanted, there would be no other peaceful negotiations and no pacific arrangements. This did not prevent Germany from occupying France in June 1940 so afterwards, the British government felt an urge to react strongly as the forces of destruction and the slaughter that Nazi Germany was committing became widespread in Europe.

### **2.1.1. The War with Nazi Germany**

The Second World War (1939-1945) was not only a direct threat to the United Kingdom but also to many other European and non-European countries which were compelled to suffer if no concrete military action was made. Understandably, Great Britain's shipyards and munitions were not as numerous as those of Germany and undoubtedly, the Second World War (1939-1945) was more devastating as it brought many new weapons such as military planes because the aero-plane was one of the main weapons that both camps used during this deadly conflict. Moreover, the British were particularly concerned about the German air superiority which was the reason why the Royal Air Force (RAF) was trying to sharpen its arsenal in the period between 1939 and 1945. The British Royal Air Force and the British

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<sup>2</sup> A. Briggs, *Social History of England*, Penguin Books, 1983, pp. 158-180.

Navy had the burden to protect the United Kingdom from a threatening German invasion. Then, the conflict moved southwards in northern Africa where the British Army did many sacrifices to stop the advance German menace.

For Great Britain, it was crucial to fight against Italy as well because it was Germany's main European ally and the fights were so destructive that war extended to the far east of the African continent. The British were definitely drawn to relentlessly fight against the Germans all around the British seas for the enemy was ferocious with its optimized weapons.<sup>3</sup> The United States also brought its military contribution in order to help the British Army in its manoeuvre which consisted in protecting the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Hence, the British played a major role in slowing down the German offensive thanks to their strategic bombing and spying programmes and more importantly, unlike Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Japan and Russia that used to be organised and rather more equipped to perform military actions on the ground, the British and American armies respectively managed to use air power in maritime zones and this helped them a lot in terms of strategy and dissuasion.

Even if many countries started to envisage fighting against Germany, the Nazis did not seem to be alarmed at all as The Luftwaffe which was the German Air Force was really a harsh opponent for the British Royal Air Force and this rivalry lasted until the end of the war in question. In this regard, we may mention that the German Luftwaffe existed even before Adolf Hitler's rule and more precisely, the company Lufthansa was providing its planes for the German Army and German pilots were trained to use those new planes. It should be pointed out that companies such as Junkers, Messerschmitt and Heinkel were producing the military planes which were used to bombard the United Kingdom and other European countries. Adolf Hitler viewed the air superiority as being primordial to dominate the whole European continent and one of the first military projects he decided to launch was the expansion of the Luftwaffe and consequently, the production rate of the German military planes over passed the British one by 1939.

In addition, the Germans made sure to build the most sophisticated tanks and equipments in an attempt to force their enemies to surrender without further resistance and clearly, these tanks were simply invincible as they combined fire power, durability and speed. Furthermore,

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<sup>3</sup> R.J., Evans, Richard *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005, pp. 555-638.

the German tanks were of a great help in terms of tactics because they included several innovative specificities and technically, these tanks had more powerful engines than those of Great Britain. Nazi Germany was a dreadful contender for it caused much more casualties to its enemies than it took and we have to consider that Hitler also insisted on training the German soldiers so as to teach them the best tactics to adopt during a direct conflict. As the German Army received more and more tanks, the crews had to adapt quickly to their usage. During the 1940s, German troops on the ground opted for the Blitzkrieg which consisted in launching quick attacks on the ground to surprise the allies.

Despite the high performance of the German tanks, they used to be destroyed by the allies but since the German troops opted for the Blitzkrieg, this made it even more complicated for the allies to beset them. Nazi Germany effectively built and tested various machine guns and other tanks. In this insight, some of the German tanks that were used during the Second World War (1939-1945) include the Leichttraktor, the Panzer I, the Panzer II, the Panzer III, the Panzer IV, the Marder I, the Marder II, the Hetzer, the Panther I, the Panther II, the Tiger I, the Tiger (P), the Tiger II, the Löwe, the E 25, the Jagdpanzer E 100, the Leopard I, the E 50, the E 75 the E 100 and the Maus, among many others. It is a fact, between 1939 and 1945, Nazi Germany built far more light, medium and heavy tanks than any other nation. Adolf Hitler really meant to build other secret weapons that were supposed to help Germany challenge any enemy.

One major detail was that metal was quite expensive in the late 30s and only few citizens accepted to make donations. Furthermore, since Germany was already advanced in terms of heavy industries, the production of these tanks was supervised by well-known German companies like Porsche, Maybach, MAN, Daimler-Benz, Krupp and many others. It has to be mentioned that despite the limited number of the produced tanks, Nazi Germany was able to occupy France thanks to these impressive armoured vehicles which helped it to elaborate better military tactics in short periods of time. In the start of the 1940s, Hitler wanted even more tanks to be produced as he trusted the constructors who proposed to build bigger and more powerful tanks with better reinforcements. In consequence, this encouraged Nazi Germany's leader to invade Yugoslavia and Greece between 1940 and 1941.

In the meantime, the United Kingdom was upgrading its weapons so as to be ready in case of a German assault on its shore, yet Nazi Germany continued to spread towards Eastern Europe and in July 1940, Hitler's Third Reich launched Unternehmen Barbarossa which means: Operation Barbarossa; this appellation refers to Friedrich I, Barbarossa who was a



German roman emperor. We have to understand that this military action consisted in invading the ex-Soviet Union despite the fact that both countries signed a non aggression pact in August the 23th of 1939 for they agreed upon sharing Eastern Europe peacefully. The Wehrmacht which was the main German ground force needed better tanks to defeat the Soviet tanks which were more efficient in close combat than they predicted and in the meantime, the United States also brought its military contribution as they brought some of their tanks like the M2 Light, the Medium Tank M2, the M3 Stuart, the M4 Sherman, the T30, the Hellcat, the Wolverine, the M26 Pershing, the Jackson, the Heavy Tank M6, the T29 and many other tanks that were shipped towards the French west coast a few years later.<sup>4</sup>

The problem for the Germans was that most of their tanks were suffering from a problem of solidity as far as their armour was concerned; the United Kingdom was deeply concerned about this race to weapons that was invading Germany. As the conflict expanded, defending itself became a taxing task for Britain and despite the dangerous technological advance of Nazi Germany, the British Royal Air Force was determined to defend the British skies from any invasion for it had lots of experience, so it began to organise military operations and sorties while cooperating with other British forces to manage air supply and the transportation of soldiers as well as their equipments. In fact, as the British elite felt remorse regarding the flexibility it offered Germany after The First World War (1914-1918), it was obvious for Great Britain to enter into action militarily against the Nazis.

In terms of heavy industries, it has to be noted that a series of strides had been made during the Second World War (1939-1945) and this allowed both Great Britain and Germany to sustain air supremacy. Hence, the United Kingdom was certainly under military pressure in the 1940s but this did not prevent the British from hoping for victory because even if the Luftwaffe caused the death of almost 15,000 British people and the injury of roughly 20,300 people in the period between September 1940 and Mai 1941 and despite the fact that millions of British civilians fled London as well as the other main English cities, the prime minister Winston Churchill managed to cheer up the British troops and civilians who were very concerned as to the survival of their nation. Indeed, he was deeply convinced that Great Britain's future will be eternally bond to its glorious past because Winston Churchill was obsessed with victory over Nazi Germany and he vividly encouraged the British people to only envisage beating their enemy. In this framework, we have to recall that the German air

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<sup>4</sup> Ch.Ellis, German Tanks and Fighting Vehicles of World War II, Book Sales, 1978, pp. 56-83.

strikes affected British cities such as: London, Plymouth, Liverpool, Coventry, Great Yarmouth, Canterbury and Exeter. Here is one of the numerous speeches that were given by Winston Churchill during the Second World War (1939-1945) and the following gives us a glimpse of his eager and fear:

*“When I first began to make speech, I was in a fever lest someone should haul me over the coals for a verbal or trivial contradiction. Then I soon found that the greater part of a speech goes in at one ear and comes out at the other. [...] You can always silence a questioner though it be only by a bad joke. Life would be too short if we had to set so rigid a watch upon our lips as all that. Besides which, if we were always calculating and hesitating over the precise effect, the painful consistency of every sentence, we should cease to be natural and spontaneous and therefore convincing”<sup>5</sup>*

Besides, it has to be understood that this dangerous situation pushed Great Britain to take a firm stand against her enemy and from May 1940 to June 1941, the British finally realised that their ultimate fight would be crucial for their survival as they had to combat Nazi Germany alone. As a result, the United Kingdom suffered a lot militarily since it endured continual struggles and a relentless attempt to defend its borders against the German menace which was increasingly felt in Western Europe. Winston Churchill did his best to encourage the demoralised soldiers not to give up on their freedom and he continued to incite the British people to volunteer in the army so as to assist the needy British regions. Meanwhile, German aerial bombardments harshly destroyed daily life in the country. It is interesting to note that Great Britain was in a critic situation because even if the British soldiers meant to resist as long as possible, the Third Reich was becoming an empire of its own.

Such hard times naturally made it impossible for the United Kingdom to envisage a serious military plan and the British progressively felt left alone by their European allies and this was becoming more frightening than ever because contrarily to France which had to settle arrangements with the Germans, the United Kingdom persisted on the fatalistic idea to never surrender. Nevertheless, the British perfectly knew that they could not fight Nazi Germany on their own, as the fights became even stronger. They primarily fought alone but they sincerely hoped that their American ally would enter the war as soon as possible and help them towards the final victory. As if this deadly situation was not enough, things worsened during the summer when the Germans imposed their blockade on the United Kingdom and it was precisely at that time that Great Britain urgently needed food and other crucial goods.

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<sup>5</sup> R., Toye, *The Roar of the Lion: The Untold Story of Churchill's World War II Speeches*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 19.

As a result, the United States started to send such war goods across the Atlantic Ocean to the United Kingdom and fortunately, some of these ships arrived safe and sound to British ports but the German submarine commanders were utterly determined to wreck and sink those American ships. Many of these ships eventually sank because of the dreary U boat which was one of the best submarine ships Germany had ever produced. That maritime military struggle is referred to as the Battle of the Atlantic. The United Kingdom went incontrovertibly through a tough journey since the beginning of the Second World War (1939-1945). The next milestone consisted in stopping the German aggression and for that particular reason, military strategies and technical support had to be reconsidered. Thus, throughout all Europe, resistance movements started to emerge to get rid of the German sharp scythe.

Nonetheless, the Germans managed to cut off communications between the British and the French and naturally, this made it more complicated for the British to receive food and weapons. In France for instance, regions like Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk were under siege and these were very strategic areas for both French and British armies and the Germans launched deadly fights in Calais and also in Boulogne, so the British Guards did their best to defend Boulogne but the onslaught was so strong that they had to withdraw but in Calais, the Rifle Brigade, the 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles and Queen Victoria's Rifles were assisted by a battalion of several British tanks and numerous French soldiers managed to resist to the German progression on the ground.<sup>6</sup> Again, the British were asked to surrender by the Germans but they simply spurned that offer and the combats inevitably outnumbered causing many casualties among British and French ranks as well as an important destruction.

In effect, German attacks became heavier for the Nazis surrounded British and French armies in Belgium and that was a hard blow as many of those soldiers were made captives by the Germans and clearly, the allies encountered many difficulties. Without contest, this was a pitiful period of time for the British army because the enemy was fiercely attacking the allies on all sides. In fact, the conflict reached such levels of violence that German soldiers sowed magnetic mines in different channels and seas to destroy the allies' ships that were continuously trying to assist Great Britain in terms of food and new weapons; to make sure no chance was left for the survival of the British people, the Third Reich continued to launch its destructive aircraft waves upon the British skies but the Royal Navy was permanently straining the German U-boat assaults.

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<sup>6</sup> M., Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000, p. 578.

Besides, the British and also some of the French soldiers who embarked for Great Britain were depressed because not only had they to deal with that challenging northern coast and all that ceaseless fire from heavy artillery but also with its adverse weather conditions. German torpedoes were also very devastating and this terrible ordeal lasted many days and nights but the British men and women never really envisaged to surrender; these protracted fights pushed the British armies and particularly the Royal Air Force to strike back at German military planes and this miraculously allowed the United Kingdom to remain safe from any invasion. In this insight, we have to add that the British soldiers who served in the Second World War (1939-1945) had valorous moral and they were known for their perseverance and their discipline but their losses were considerably high.

A few months later, the Germans became frustrated for they could not prevent American ships from arriving to certain British coasts and thanks to the Royal Navy and to the Royal Air Force, German troops paid fourfold for the losses they have inflicted on the British and on the French. The United Kingdom had to vindicate defending its territories otherwise the war would have collapsed this old empire. We also need to understand that the British had reliable military planes such as the Bristol Blenheim, the North American Mustang, the Republic Thunderbolt, the Supermarine Spitfire, the Supermarine Seafire, the Vought Corsair, the Westland Whirlwind and many other aircrafts so after all, they still had the means to shatter their enemy and save their country.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, this continual bereavement had to cease and even if the allies succeeded in some operations, the pangs of those colossal losses were still witnessed in the fields, on the sea, as well as in the air and despite all their exertions, Germany was still quite strong militarily as its army was known for its stringency and tyranny.

### **2.1.2. The Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations**

At the start of the 1940s, the British Army Commanders reported about the fact that they had no solid protection against low-level air assaults and they needed more help to beat the German Luftwaffe. The main problem was the weakness of air assistance and also the lack of armored vehicles on the ground and on the other hand, the Germans were still successful in their operations thanks to planes like the Junkers Ju 87 and the Messerschmitt Bf 109 which helped them to assist the numerous Panzer divisions during the Blitzkrieg. The British were

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<sup>7</sup> R. J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory*, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 251-390.

decidedly less prepared militarily and used second-rate equipments. Unfortunately, in June 1940, the Royal Air Force lost about 1,000 military planes, more than 300 pilots and 115 other pilots were imprisoned. Another major failure on the allies' camp was the quick evacuation from France because that forced them to abandon a great number of ground equipments and that thoroughly fostered the will of the German troops who started to envisage victory over the whole European continent.

It may seem contradictory or even ironic at first, but the island country that used to exercise great power on its colonies had to ask help from them and these were the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. In addition, the Second World War (1939-1945) considerably weakened the British defenses and their witty stratagems could not save them anymore. It is important to note that the British were always viewed as being narcissists and totally conceited in terms of foreign or even local politics and what is more is that they never asked for help before but the situation was so catastrophic in the early 40s that the ally's camp had to increase considerably in size. The British people were deeply concerned about the evolution of the uncountable battles that opposed their armies to Nazi German troops but they were united and eager to fiercely defend their native country, since it was a new era where the British could not afford any concession over their freedom.

Meanwhile, the Gestapo continued to investigate in Germany seeking for any useful information about the progress and other strategic moves that were potentially made by the allies' troops; this growing confidence encouraged Hitler to deploy his troops even further East in an attempt to invade Russia.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the ex Soviet Union inevitably entered this war in June 1941 and that was also a key moment in our modern world's history. Furthermore, this allowed the British to strengthen their fleet in order to better defend the surrounding sea and the sky above London. The situation remained static until the winter of 1942-43 where Hitler's troops started to suffer heavy casualties. Afterwards, Great Britain and her allies started to fight Germany and Italy in Europe and also Japan in Eastern Asia which used to be a member of the axis powers. Those offensives lasted entire months and fortunately for the allies, the German U-boats were no longer invincible thanks to the ingenious tactics of the allies who did manage to smartly blur their communications and only allow the Germans to find out about fake plans. Moreover, we have to consider that Europe was witnessing a

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<sup>8</sup> R., Grunberger, *The 12-year Reich: A Social History of Nazi Germany, 1933-1945*, Da Capo Press, United States, 1995, pp. 18-135.

complete humanitarian disaster so the Americans also entered the war zone for they debarked in the western French coast of Normandy in June the 6<sup>th</sup> of 1944 and that was called Operation Overlord. Obviously, the Americans were better equipped than both the French and the British armies yet, that did not bother Hitler as he was thinking that the Nazi domination would prevail in Europe and even in some western parts of Russia.

Again, the Americans brought even more weapons and many other armored vehicles so as to assist the British and the French on the ground against the Germans because they knew that Hitler was urging his industrial partners to build even bigger and stronger tanks. This was an interesting turning point in the Second World War (1939-1945) as technology was relentlessly and utterly exploited for deadly purposes and hence, it became a vicious circle where developed nations and especially Nazi Germany, were heading towards gaining an unshakeable power over many countries, even if those were hostile to its expanding military power. Even if some high ranked military commanders were against that idea, Adolf Hitler did not mean to skimp on the resources he had and when the American, British and French troops found out about Hitler's unstoppable ambition, they felt that this radical armament race must be put to an end. History had to be written in that conflicting era and the allies meant to brace themselves to destroy German might before it would be too late to react but it was far from being an easy toil.

In effect, as the Americans brought many soldiers, tanks, medical equipments and other useful weapons, the allies started to envisage a direct assault on Germany but the period in question was decisive for both camps because times were hard for the allies during the Battle of Britain and we also need to note that the Nazis dominated the combats on the ground in Northern Africa, as they had better tanks; they also imposed their power in the Atlantic Ocean again, thanks to their dangerous U-boats.<sup>9</sup>

Despite all these efforts, the allies still needed other nations' contribution for they were eagerly looking to strike firmly at the heart of Germany and also to completely free France from the Nazi occupation. Even if the south of England had been bombarded by the German Luftwaffe, it has to be understood that Nazi Germany never invaded the United Kingdom while it overran most of the European countries. In fact, the main danger for Britain was that Germany was sending its massive air fleets to bombard her and also many dive-bombers from

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<sup>9</sup> I. E., Johnston-White, *The British Commonwealth and Victory in the Second World War*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 91-175.

several military bases that were located in Norway, the Netherlands and in France. Besides, after the Americans and the Soviets, it was high time for the Commonwealth free member states to participate in this world conflict in order to help the United Kingdom to achieve final victory. As we have already explained, life conditions were appalling at that time and triumph just seemed to be unaffordable.

In effect, the help that was brought by the countries of the Commonwealth was even more important than the allies' combined contribution because it has to be stated that the number of the Commonwealth countries which took part in this major war exceeded the one of the allies and again, even if some colonies and other Commonwealth countries did not take part in this major war, these still represented roughly three quarters of the world's population. As it has been mentioned above, the Second World War (1939-1945) was even more devastating than the first one for conflicts raged in different parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. This global war engaged people from different nations but the Commonwealth's mission was above all to protect the United Kingdom from any German aggression and this rapidly enhanced the military situation of the allies, in spite of the heavy human cost and all the sacrifices that had to be made. The Commonwealth was clearly beneficial for the allies as this organisation was still at its early stages of development and since it promoted international peace and tolerance towards others, it was quite logical for many of its members to come to the rescue of the United Kingdom.

Hitherto, the Second World War (1939-1945) eviscerated numerous nations and in this insight, we have to consider that among the allies, the ex Soviet Union suffered a heavy loss of approximately 20 million people, during its conflict with Nazi Germany. The United States also contributed a lot financially, yet the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth members provided a crucial financial support as well as millions of military troops and equipments to defeat Germany and Japan in particular for Fascist Italy was weaker than its German neighbour. As a united group of nations, the Commonwealth certainly demonstrated its force of influence in Europe, and in the Pacific Ocean by sending over 12 million troops and it played a central role in protecting Great Britain from a lethal destruction.

From a historical point of view, this issue was of a great importance at the end of the 1940s because that war not only concerned the United Kingdom as an island country but also its crown colonies, protectorates and eventually, the British Raj<sup>10</sup> with all its natural resources.



That conflict would obviously have developed in each corner of the planet as Hitler would have sought to take vengeance of the British by strictly controlling their ex-colonies. Most importantly and contrarily to Ireland which remained neutral during the Second World War (1939-1945), other Commonwealth countries like Canada, South Africa, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and India joined Britain in its fight against the Germans. As a family, the countries that belonged to the Commonwealth of Nations were animated by a particular fervour which consisted in helping each free member state and in the case of Great Britain, it was a sensitive question and the main reason was that it was that country in particular that decided to create such an international union. Part from that, we have to mention that The Commonwealth's contribution was based on providing enough soldiers, medicine, food and training recommendations. <sup>11</sup>

During the conflicts that took place in northern Africa for instance, Commonwealth countries such as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand had sent numerous armed troops in order to prevent the German Erwin Rommel <sup>12</sup> from occupying Egypt and also to assist British troops who were having difficulties in Libya, in Ethiopia and also in the surrounding regions. Another major step was the elaboration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which included the United Kingdom and some of its Commonwealth partners like Australia, Canada and New Zealand; that plan allowed the British to train their pilots, bomb aimers, air gunners, navigators, flight engineers, intelligence services, radio and wireless operators who assisted the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm and also the Australian, Canadian and New Zealander Air Forces.

South Africa also brought its crucial contribution during the plan in question, in the sense that it helped to train over 32,000 pilots for its own and also for the allies. This training plan was furthermore applied in other countries such as Fiji, France and the United States and The British needed to train their pilots quicker as they were still suffering from German bombardments so those trainings took place in other cooperating Commonwealth countries and in some other parts of Europe. Broadly, around 120,000 Africans fought for the Allies in the Burma campaign and India provided over 2.5 million men and women for the allies and in

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<sup>10</sup> The British Raj was the rule of the British Crown in the Indian subcontinent between 1858 and 1947. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) on April the 12th 2017, at 18:34. <sup>11</sup> Ch. Ailsby, *Allied Combat Medals of World War II: Britain, the Commonwealth and Western European Nations* v. 1 (Modern weapons of the world), Patrick Stephens Ltd, Burton Lysecki Books, 1989, p. 92. <sup>12</sup> Erwin Rommel (1891–1944), commonly referred to as the Desert Fox, was a field marshal (senior military commander) in the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany during World War II. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erwin\\_Rommel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erwin_Rommel) on April the 12th 2017, at 18:42.



addition, it spent a staggering 80 per cent of its global wealth in the period between 1943 and 1944. That war effort was without doubt, one of the most important contributions of the Commonwealth towards Great Britain.

In practice, all these troops served within the British units which were fighting in Europe and in other continents. As the British and the Commonwealth countries managed to carry many heavy military operations on the ground and on air, German troops became weaker and by 1943, their tactics became less effective and the Nazi war time success was almost over so consequently, the British with many of the Commonwealth troops and the remaining allies, i.e. the United States, the ex Soviet Union and France formed another alliance in order to force the Third Reich to surrender. Furthermore, the Soviet army continued to strike back at the German troops by the late 1943 and in 1945; Hitler's troops were eventually forced to retreat from most of Eastern Europe.

In some respect, the Third Reich's troops started to shrink within Germany as the Soviet troops rapidly advanced in western Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia and in Romania, and the situation enhanced even greatly with the participation of the Commonwealth troops in this horrific fight. Afterwards, the Soviet army arrived to the German capital, Berlin and further west, the allies were supported by major Commonwealth armies who launched a series of bombardments on several airfields in an attempt to destroy the planes that were used by the German Luftwaffe.<sup>13</sup> The allies obviously bombed many key German industrial cities but that did not stop the Germans from producing new and efficient weapons. In fact, the British morale improved significantly once France was invaded by the American and Canadian troops because they knew that the Soviets were enclosing Germany from the east and that naturally meant that the allies could concentrate their military actions in the west so as to invade Germany easier.

The next step consisted in bombing major German cities and by 1945, a huge number of the German population was mobilised in the streets under Hitler's orders to defend Berlin but the

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<sup>13</sup>D., Lewis, *Churchill's Secret Warriors: The Explosive True Story of the Special Forces Desperadoes of WWII*, Quercus, London, 2015. p, 14.

combats lasted only a week; despite all the efforts that were made by Germany and that entire industrial prowess it managed to sustain, the allies were determined to force it to surrender and that was officially made on May the 7<sup>th</sup> of 1945. While analysing these historical events, we understood that the allies played a major role during the Second World War (1939-1945) but that many countries of the Commonwealth did their best to protect the United Kingdom from its Nazi enemy and it was tangible enough for such a free organisation to prove its sincere commitment towards the country that was once viewed as a coloniser for some of the Commonwealth's members. Of course, that country was in need for an immediate international help and it was naturally thanks to such a military support that the United Kingdom brilliantly survived during that ghastly war and decidedly, this was a decisive point in the history of this country and in the relationship it shared with the remaining countries of the Commonwealth of Nations.

## **2.2. The United Kingdom after the Second World War**

After the nightmare of the Second World War (1939-1945) and all the misery that was inflicted on Europe, the United Kingdom finally got rid of its Nazi enemy and that burden of victory led to the struggle for a better future as that new situation was already dividing the British political elite. After the elections of 1945, the Labour Party was democratically chosen by the British people as their aim was merely to improve the social conditions of their citizens; the latter wanted to vote and to make sure that the politicians who would enter the parliament would do their job properly and as a result, the British government started by establishing the National Health Service and this guaranteed free healthcare for all the British people. Furthermore, old British citizens enjoyed new rights such as specific pensions etc. Indeed, the United Kingdom was over determined to develop its economy and it tackled all sorts of social programmes so as to help the British people to reclaim their right to live freely.

The British government also introduced free education because knowledge took a place of pride in this country since the start of the industrial revolution. It may be underlined that the United Kingdom meant to develop each aspect of its policy for its government created new rights for unemployed citizens since this country was still looking for an economic recovery after all the expenses it had to devote in order to manage the war financially. As the recovery processes were evolving, all British workers started to contribute financially for the national insurance which guaranteed the rights of sick and unemployed people and also pregnant women on a regular basis. Furthermore, the British government decided to nationalize the

country's coal mines and other crucial industries. In addition, that included the Bank of England, railways and many other public services. Hence, the United Kingdom could breathe again thanks to the newly acquired peace and in 1949, this country was among the first founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>14</sup> which also included Western Germany as it was occupied by the Americans and the British.

That was a crucial decision because the British were convinced that such a European alliance would significantly reduce the risk of future conflicts in the old continent. Politically, the British voted for the Conservative party by the start of the 1950's and that facilitated the establishment of new postwar reforms and most of the British social classes appreciated the implementation of the National Health Service and eventually, those social measures contributed to offer over a decade of constant economic growth for the British nation. Arguably, the country that was saved from tyranny belonged to all the British people and that encouraged its citizens to aspire for more democracy, justice and equality and the cornerstone of this life improvement required lots of common effort and it should be mentioned that this new reality changed the status of Great Britain internationally as many of its colonies were granted independence after the Second World War (1939-1945).

These colonies were Malaya, Kenya, Ghana Kenya and some other African and Asian countries. In addition, labour was a major issue in the United Kingdom, so the British authorities oversaw other important measures in an attempt to prevent discontent workers from carrying further strikes and one other major detail was the fact that the United Kingdom took part in the foundation of the United Nations, back in 1945 and that also granted its government a veto within the Security Council in the 1950's. Furthermore, the British capital London became an unquestionable world centre in terms of finance, art and culture; what mattered most for the British after the victory of 1945 was the possibility of overcoming the heavy financial cost that was caused by the Second World War (1939-1945), and to envisage new economic solutions since Great Britain was no longer a superpower. <sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. The organization constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party. Accessed from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO> on April the 12th 2017, at 19:06.

<sup>15</sup>A., Booth, *British Economic Development since 1945*, Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 37.

Hence, in order not to lose its great empire, Britain opted for peaceful exchanges with the Commonwealth countries and her main goal was to strategically promote this international organisation with regard to the benefits it could offer them economically, culturally and militarily. However, as we already mentioned above, a large number of these colonies and dominions fought on Britain's behalf during the Second World War (1939-1945) and it seemed somehow hard for the British to encourage these countries to bring additional contributions. That naturally led British politicians not to focus on the military aspect of the Commonwealth but rather more on its economic sphere. That was a smart choice for the military aspect would have resulted in creating a pent-up frustration among the main members of the Commonwealth who would logically seek for quitting this entity. Thus, it was primordial for the British to move forward after the end of the most destructive war they had ever experienced.

Nevertheless, that transitional period was quite complicated for the main reason that depression systematically led the country towards a deep austerity and those economic obstacles inevitably created grim life conditions for the average British citizen. History also shows us that even sweets and chocolates were rationed before 1954, and this surely depicts the difficulties these citizens were encountering daily. The British needed to react quickly as they wanted to cheer up their gloom days but most of their cities were battered and they still seemed soulless. This clearly shows that the British and notably the younger generation changed significantly after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). So, in this insight, we have to precise that by the end of the 1950s, an important growth in population followed the rise of life expectations, and the huge sense of relief that was felt after the end of war time.

Life started to change for a lot of British people who after the trickle down of their economy, solemnly intended to create new opportunities and provide more mobility means for their own as they needed more space, more comfort and a better health care system. The United Kingdom was culturally fated to become diverse in terms of population's ethnicity and religious belief; in effect, at the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), this isle country witnessed large scale immigration. We have to point out that many people came from the West Indies and other South Asian regions and these migrants also came straight from Eastern Europe. In 1970, this country had around 375,000 Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims living inside its borders and it has to be mentioned that this number increased further in 1990. Such social and cultural changes utterly modified the behaviour of younger British people in the sense that they became more individualistic and one example of that change was the establishment of

new social norms and consequently, capital punishment was abolished on the one hand and on the other, abortion and homosexuality were legalised. <sup>16</sup>

Taking this socio-cultural evolution into consideration, we have to focus on the fact that the British women were granted a better social status after the Second World War (1939-1945) and similarly to the other countries of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom additionally promoted a policy of women empowerment for the sake of sustaining a better society that would be quite aware about the legacy of the people who fought hard against the beastliness of Nazi Germany for freedom and for the survival of their nation. This country was chiefly trying to find a reliable means to jump again economically and more than ever, the United Kingdom needed the help of the Commonwealth in its continuous endeavour in order to uphold its international status.

Such a reconstruction simply foreshadowed the bright future of the United Kingdom and its miraculous survival after the Second World War (1939-1945). As the reconstruction of some parts of this country began, the British population enjoyed a peaceful atmosphere and many aspects of their lives enhanced; they were no more worried about their future. Politically and economically, the United Kingdom was changing as it joined the European Community, back in 1973 but that did not mean that it intended to forget about its growing links with the Commonwealth community. In reality, this damaged country suffered a lot from the German Blitz attacks and it was high time to rebuild the British parliament, so many Commonwealth countries offered Britain important gifts to contribute into the rebuilding of the House of Commons Chamber and to sweep away the reminiscences of those violent bombardments.

### **2.2.1. Rebuilding the United Kingdom after the Second World War**

We need to know that before the 26 October 1950, the new Chamber of the House of Commons was still under reconstruction and at least 12 Commonwealth nations brought specific native woods which were grown in their respective countries and these woods were then refined and finally produced and used in Britain. More explicitly, the Bahamas provided the United Kingdom with a writing desk and a chair for the British Minister. Even if Barbados only joined the Commonwealth in 1966, this country did provide the United Kingdom with the same kind of furniture. The Black bean wood of Australia was also used to fabricate the Speaker's Chair. This country additionally provided the United Kingdom with its well known

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<sup>16</sup> A., Marr, *The Making of Modern Britain*, Pan; Reprints edition, 2010, p. 351.

Castanospermum austral and with some other noble wood varieties. As for Botswana, this country offered a silver gilt ashtray, similarly to some other Asian countries such as India and Singapore. <sup>17</sup>

Canada greatly helped the United Kingdom in its reconstruction for it offered Britain the table that became later on the Table of the House of Commons; this table was produced in Canadian Oak and it was made and assembled by the Canadian Globe Furniture Company which was based in Waterloo, Ontario; the other Commonwealth free member states that helped the United Kingdom to recover from the German bombardments included: Belize, Bermuda, Falkland Islands, Fiji, The Gambia, Cyprus, Gibraltar which offered two oak table lamps with bronze shades. On the other hand, Dominica, Windward Islands, Grenada, Ghana also offered the United Kingdom a writing desk and a chair that were made in Mansonia altissima and the list does not end here because the other Commonwealth members who contributed to rebuild the United Kingdom were India, Guyana, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Jamaica, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia and many other such free member states.

That was certainly a good start with regard to the reconstruction of London and hence, the development of the United Kingdom seemed promising as there were over 50 Commonwealth members who represented their respective countries by offering important items that were made by special materials; these materials were only found in those countries. Moreover, the fact that each member of the Commonwealth showed its will to help the United Kingdom by providing some wood, ornaments or other useful equipments proves the unquestionable role that was played by the Commonwealth during and after the Second World War (1939-1945) and that was a quite strong political symbol that these countries sent to the whole world as most of them were former British colonies. In this insight, we should consider that the parquet floors of the British parliament were made from Australian Walnut wood and this further shows the complementarily both the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth had at that particular time.

Thus, the United Kingdom slowly started to develop its various infrastructures as many satellite towns such as Harlow and Stevenage emerged around London and the British authorities recommended building even more houses in order to replace the numerous

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<sup>17</sup>D., Gerhold, , *Nine Hundred Years of History*, Westminster Hall: James & James (Publishers) Ltd, LONDON, 1999, pp. 97-115.

buildings that were destroyed during the war; such a radical measure was taken for the population was growing at an unprecedented faster rate and it has to be mentioned that the British wanted to get rid of the London slums that were formed right after the end of the Second World War, in 1945. After more than a decade, the Welfare state's concept started to pay off because many public buildings were erected in and all around London and in this regard, part from the British Parliament, the first building that was constructed after the war was the Royal Festival Hall on the Southbank.

As we have already mentioned above, the streets of London were utterly wrecked in just one night of the Blitz Krieg, so the British carried on their reconstruction project which was considered as the biggest in Europe and of course, this reconstruction included art centres, museums and new schools as well as colleges. As the Commonwealth contributed into this recovery, the United Kingdom encouraged many Jamaican, Asian and African migrants to come to Britain and help it in its vast reconstruction programme. In other words, these migrants were invited to join the Royal Air Force in order to strengthen the British military camps and that hugely contributed into the growth of the Afro-Caribbean communities in the British capital London. Despite this encouraging reconstruction of Britain, this country still encountered financial issues and that really made it difficult to import necessary means for the growing population.<sup>18</sup>

This propensity to overcome potential hardships pushed the British to provide even more efforts to enhance their economical situation and that encouraged this country to promote more openness towards Europe. Militarily, the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allowed the United Kingdom to guarantee a secured environment for itself as well as for the remaining European countries. Besides, this allowed it to modernise its military forces and to sell even more weapons to other nations who needed to defend themselves. We have to add that the fact of granting independence to countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Burma in 1948 reassured many other new Commonwealth members with regard to the relationship they would share with the United Kingdom after their independence.

Indeed, the British policy changed positively towards its former colonies however, Great Britain insisted on remaining a world superpower and for that main reason, the British not only sought to rebuild their destroyed country but they also launched their nuclear weapons'

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<sup>18</sup> H., Glennerster, P.A., Howard, and T., Travers, *A New Era for Social Policy: a New Enlightenment or a New Leviathan?* Journal of Social Policy, Vol. 20. No. 3. 1991, pp. 389-414.



programme. Indeed, that decision was made under a secretive form to preserve other ulterior plans from being figured out by reluctant political parties that would disagree with the institution of that sensitive project. Tellingly, the welfare state provided this country with a quite remarkable means to introduce new useful political measures that allowed fostering the British economy for the decades to come and for the whole, the British gradually overcame the obstacles they were facing and historically, it can also be assumed that the British model is admirable. We also need to note that after 1945, the United Kingdom made it a priority for the British to have employment and that choice was totally comprehensive as Great Britain needed to strengthen consumers' affluence.

The end of the Second World War (1939-1945) was the appropriate period to establish such new rules for public attention was seriously shifting towards domestic concerns. In addition, historians argue that the destruction which heavily affected the United Kingdom in the 1930's left a powerful memory on both the British people and on their government and they were all hyperactively working to get rid of misery and also to prevent it from occurring again. As we know, the war was the main cause of unemployment and poverty in Britain and regarding the establishment of the Welfare state, the British Labour government needed six long years to apply those socio-economical changes which eventually brought glee among the British population as every British citizen had the same chances to potentially reach prosperity. Since the British government did not easily manage to overcome its financial issues, one key member of the Commonwealth, Canada, sent smaller loans to Great Britain and that allowed the British economy to jump again as social services became more effective in improving the life and working conditions of the British citizens.

One of the interesting aspects of the welfare state was the establishment of the National Insurance Act of 1946<sup>19</sup> because the British government did not intend to flinch in its reconstruction strategy and thanks to that particular act, working British citizens had been able to contribute through a small amount of money to guarantee they would be paid in case they could not work because of illness or because of any other personal constraints.

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<sup>19</sup>The National Insurance Act 1946 was a British Act of Parliament which established a comprehensive system of social security throughout the United Kingdom. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Insurance\\_Act\\_1946](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Insurance_Act_1946) on April the 13th 2017, at 15:04.



That act was then enhanced via the introduction of the National Assistance Act of 1948 which the Labour party chose in order to cancel the Poor Law system that had been introduced and applied in Great Britain for the era of her Majesty, Elizabeth I. That act was basically set so as to insure a solid social protection for all the British citizens, even those who did not contribute by paying their National insurance dues.<sup>20</sup>

Luckily, physically disabled individuals such as wounded soldiers and other homeless people as well as unmarried widows had new social advantages that helped them to survive during that economic crisis. Furthermore, in its continuous social effort, the British Labour party needed more workers to sustain an increasing production in the British factories, since consumers' demand started to grow so as a result, the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act was introduced in 1946. Of course, the British government seriously meant not to leave any British community forgotten so it also offered various social services for aged people who were too weak to work and hence, in the incapacity to afford a decent living. Free meals were also distributed for volunteers who took part in the conflict against Nazi Germany and clearly, it can be assumed that the United Kingdom was progressively paving the way for more useful rules and standards.

Despite the remaining financial issues, the right of having a minimum standard of living for all the British citizens naturally increased people's trust in their government and all the other parties of the British parliament agreed upon this programme and eventually supported the establishment of the National Insurance Act, even though they disapproved the establishment of the National Health Service.

### **2.2.2. The UK and Germany after 1945**

We have to mention that as 1945 began, Adolf Hitler made his farewell speech on the German radio announcing without knowing, his last New Year's wishes to the German nation in a quite tense context.<sup>21</sup> In fact, this country was inevitably going to experience a heavy defeat after all the war efforts that were made before but Hitler was still convinced that Germany would end up victorious. Ultimately, the Greater Third Reich was witnessing its last glory days but surprisingly, the German population welcomed Hitler's speech which was full

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<sup>20</sup>I.R.G., Spencer, *British Immigration Policy since 1939: The Making of Multi-racial Britain*. London: Routledge, 1997, P. 38.

<sup>21</sup>Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944-1945*, Penguin Books, London, 2012, PP 3-129.

of hope regarding their future. Moreover, in late March 1945, the Security Service of the German SS indicated that German fronts were collapsing even faster, both in the East and in the West and the Germans were in complete disarray because they gradually understood that defeat was inevitable and that they would see their country destroyed powerlessly. As we have already mentioned, Germany was defeated for the second time in history and militarily, the rules had to change as the allies were planning for a better Europe.

The analysis of the British-German relationship after 1945 commonly seems to be somehow ambiguous. As we have discussed above, the United Kingdom made lots of sacrifices to combat its Nazi enemy by the past, and as Germany became a Federal Republic after the Second World War (1939-1945), Britain meant to prove its sincere will to help for the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In a sense, Germany moved from the status of major enemy to the one of a potential strong Western partner in the fight against Soviet communism. The British government definitely meant to spread that idea of union inside Europe for the lesson was learned from both the First and the Second World Wars. It was high time for the settlement of a peaceful atmosphere between the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany and hence, that importantly signified a peaceful and a stronger Europe.

Clearly enough, that peaceful arrangement was of a paramount importance for both countries because after having experienced two deadly conflicts, Germany was obviously determined not to be viewed as the main instigator of further conflicts within Europe. In other words, the Federal Republic of Germany wanted to mend its exchanges with its eastern and western neighbours who used to be viewed as its main enemies; these neighbours were the United Kingdom, Poland, France and Czechoslovakia. As for the United Kingdom, this country was still strongly linked to the Commonwealth of Nations as it was seriously committed to contribute into the improvement and the empowerment of many free member states. Furthermore, the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 largely contributed to appease the diplomatic exchanges between the United Kingdom and Germany. <sup>22</sup>

After 1973, the adhesion into the European Union additionally contributed into the reconciliation of both countries and this point is quite relevant in the sense that their

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<sup>22</sup> J. H., Wiener, *Great Britain: Foreign Policy and the Span of Empire, 1689-1971: A Documentary History*, Chelsea House, 1972, p. 1248.

relationship became richer despite some political disparities as well as a populist uncertainty amongst the British citizens who witnessed the violence of the German bombardments. However that rapprochement was inevitable as socio-economic issues started to emerge in multiple parts of Europe and most European countries were looking for viable solutions to enhance their situation so it seems obvious that the improvement of the relationship between both countries was somehow granted. Surely, history is riddled with such intricate relationships that are shared between ancient enemies but in the case of both Germany and the United Kingdom, it is more complicated than it seems, as the separation of eastern and western Germany hugely contributed in encouraging the British not to view their neighbour as they did by the not so remote past. Conventional wisdom leads us to assume that the German economic growth and the manifold exchanges that followed between both nations essentially before and during the 1990's additionally facilitated that crucial reconciliation.

In order to have a clearer idea about the relationship both countries shared, we should focus more on the real goals of the British government since the latter meant above all to bet on the future of the United Kingdom which of course, included Europe's. Each country definitely understood the severity of war conditions and it was crucial to settle peaceful relations that rather more consisted on bringing up next generations on noble values such as peace, respect and tolerance but most effectively, the British insisted on not to impose another harsh punishment on the Germans because that political failure would inevitably lead them to suffer from that overwhelming vicious circle of violence and protestation. Hence, as opposed to precedent years where Germany was isolated, Great Britain recurrently invited western Germany to take part into various important summits to make sure both governments would share the same objectives regarding different aspects of their policies, but we have to know that those blossoming relations were far from being excessive. Certainly, the main principles underlying that rapprochement were that the awareness of the British about the mutual interests that would meet later on proved to be right. Meanwhile, in Germany, people were working hard to unleash their destroyed country from its post 1945 issues for the factories progressively resumed their productions and in 1970, even the German Research Institute of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige<sup>23</sup> pointed at the enhancement of the relations between the United Kingdom and Western Germany.

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<sup>23</sup>Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik Is a network and a think-tank for foreign policy and operates research facilities for questions of international politics as well as the foreign and security policy. Retrieved from: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche\\_Gesellschaft\\_f%C3%BCr\\_Ausw%C3%A4rtige\\_Politik](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Gesellschaft_f%C3%BCr_Ausw%C3%A4rtige_Politik) on April the 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 15:06.

Besides, the fact that Western and Soviet troops were stationed throughout Germany did not prevent the Germans from planning to reconstruct their destroyed homes. Both the British and the Germans were supposedly experiencing the same brutal outcomes of the Second World War (1939-1945), although differently. Still, regarding this chequered relationship, it is naturally useful to note that the Germans were additionally aiming for mutual peace as that was witnessed from Konrad Adenauer to Helmut Kohl who agreed both with Churchill's idea of a future United States of Europe.

So we can easily understand that the relationship between the German Christian Democrats and the British Conservatives was a key factor that optimised those political exchanges even further. Indeed, both parties managed to have more good deals than divergences. Further, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher's Party finally came to power in the United Kingdom and coincidentally or not, Helmut Kohl was elected as Chancellor three years later in Germany. Hence, during the years that followed, it was primordial to find mutual solutions regarding defence and all the major decisions about European policy. Another major rapprochement was the one of both parliaments, as co-operation between the Conservatives and the Christian Democrats became even stronger because the meetings were regular and that largely contributed into integrating that solid understanding and mutual trust.

In 1989, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, it was the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany and the British-German relations became even better as Germany joined the Western alliance which primary goal was to defend Europe and to make sure it remains safe. The key element that brought that change was the mutual will to defend national traditions and other institutions. In fact, both Germany and the United Kingdom meant to promote individual freedom as they respectively limited governmental interferences regarding citizens' lives. In addition, these two nations were determined to sustain a stronger economy for their respective communities via generalising free entrepreneurial activities and encouraging for a diversified society.

Fortunately for both nations, relations were progressively enhancing and that was quite beneficial as far as their mutual future was concerned. Indeed, a great importance was given to education and to information means. New technologies were also taken into consideration preparing for a more globalised world and an undeniable demographic growth, so both governments decided to take action so as to produce more goods and to adapt faster to new economic situations. It is obvious that such reconciliation is fascinating and the key words after the Second World War (1939-1945) were economic growth, science and development.

As far as our study is concerned, we should emphasise on the fact that the guarantee of enjoying peaceful exchanges was of a paramount importance as the world was shifting rapidly in terms of international power. It should be added that defeated Germany became more or less the testing ground for the victorious allies in terms of further military agreements and we have to insist on the fact that Hitler's era brought a bleak atmosphere upon Europe and it becomes quite clear that after 1945, both countries were urgently looking for new political practices. Another major point was that the Second World War (1939-1945) was no more a direct threat for humanity since it just ended. <sup>23</sup>

In fact, every necessary measure was taken so as to avoid the denigration of Germany by some of the sceptical British citizens. It was the appropriate time for building a more confident Europe as a whole; and here, it is interesting to note that similarly to the objectives of the Commonwealth of Nations, the United Kingdom and Germany jointly aimed at fighting poverty, illiteracy and the spread of some deadly diseases. Moreover, these two countries are respectively linked by major historical bonds that one cannot deny and consequently, their destiny is constantly linked to the events of both World Wars, especially the Second World War (1939-1945) which pushed Britain to invest its armies even more into direct combats. Luckily, a new spirit of union began to shape up inside both countries; in a sense, Germany and Britain were the protagonists of the new Europe as the burden of its reconstruction was particularly felt in the countries in question.

As we have explained above, that was the only realistic means to avoid a new catastrophic nosedive for Europe. It should also be considered that the victorious allies did not want to bring any encroachment regarding the foreign politics of reunified Germany because only in those pacifist conditions could Britain and Germany seriously envisage a serene future.

### **2.2.3 The Commonwealth and Global Politics**

All too often, we tend to think that the Commonwealth of Nations remains an international entity that was only created by the United Kingdom to fulfill a limited political action. However, this multi-faceted organization aspires for numerous projects as plenty of crucial political issues are discussed during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. Indeed. These meetings are usually dominated by a strong will for lobbying peaceful negotiations between the free member states and some times, the role of this united group

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<sup>23</sup> R., Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace*, Simon & Schuster UK, 2010, p. 340.

even transcends the barriers of its own members and among the main Commonwealth countries that were frequently active in this regard, we can mention the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and India. The Commonwealth is global in essence as its policy is internationally-oriented in its networking activities as well as in strategically imposing a sense of identity for its major member states.

Above all, we have to consider the growing use of the English language across the globe and the fact that its free member states are in majority English speaking former colonies or protectorates; it is a major factor that is still contributing into the spread of the Commonwealth's political ideals. The Commonwealth membership may potentially change, in the sense that it may grow or decrease but that will not affect its principal mission which encompasses the promotion of a more globalised world in terms of politics and also in terms of economy, culture and even in sport activities. It is obvious to assume that the management of these objectives bolsters the position of the United Kingdom internationally, which means that this country's image will remain closely attached to the positive actions that are performed by the Commonwealth of Nations and the compromised reality of our modern world continuously puts great nations under a reckless pressure, so the United Kingdom constantly needs to clarify its political positions.

Furthermore, contrivance is a word that may very well describe some of the actions of the Commonwealth as this group of nations performs various political actions as well as donations, in an attempt to attract an increasing number of volunteer countries. We have to understand that strategically, the Commonwealth's membership does not require from potential members to be directly linked to the United Kingdom and this really proves how independent this institution became, many years after its initial foundation. Moreover, we can confidently assume that the Commonwealth of Nations is present as the world endlessly witnesses military conflicts in several sensitive regions and as it has been already mentioned, one other major mission is that the Commonwealth of Nations allows different nations to exchange and argue equally and this continuously attracts more aspiring countries for membership.

Besides, the Commonwealth insists on developing further democratic consensuses so as to avoid any ulterior interests' conflicts between the free member states. In terms of politics, the Commonwealth of Nations has to uphold many constructive objectives in the long term by accompanying smaller countries in the signature of economic pacts with other bigger countries. Assertively, the Commonwealth of Nations is no longer an organisation that is

exclusively run by the United Kingdom, although its members have to owe allegiance to the British Queen and we have to note that despite all the dismay some countries may experience with their political evolution, the Commonwealth never adopted an aimless policy with the latter. The Commonwealth is basically against the usurpation of power which can only cause anarchy and chaos; we have to know that the Commonwealth effectively managed to sweep away the ills of the old British Empire, which was viewed as the great oppressor.

After such a prowess, the time was ripe for an even more impressive historical accretion for this international entity, for we have to highlight the fact that each member country celebrates the Commonwealth Day on each year's march, the 14<sup>th</sup>. Through its remarkable actions, the Commonwealth intimated a steady trust in human value and in contrast with other continental organisations; the Commonwealth of Nations leaves a legacy on many of its member states., In South Africa for instance, Nelson Mandela left a colossal impact, not only within this international institution but also in the whole world as his country suffered from apartheid. That marginalized man was an emblematic figure who represented reconciliation and the acceptance of all races as he promoted such noble values in world politics and also in statesmanship and naturally, the Commonwealth of Nations took a historical stand in order to fight hatred and racism and to teach the youth about showing respect and bringing together their skills to fulfil a much developed society with better mores after all.

Although there are still other great issues across the globe, the pride of the countries belonging to the Commonwealth resides in the fact that their democratic club had been able to stop apartheid and to unite South Africa; giving it an international perspective as well, in the sense that South Africa was no longer stigmatised by other nations because of its racial troubles. Of course, the Commonwealth worked hand in hand with Nelson Mandela seeking for offering a more stable life for African people who were undergoing violence and discrimination because of the colour of their skin. <sup>24</sup>

In the cascade of events that followed in South Africa during that complicated era, Nelson Mandela also said that he really detested racialism as for him; it was merely a barbaric thing, whether it came from a black or from a white individual and that it should be put to an end as soon as possible. Unsurprisingly, the Commonwealth gained more credibility because it supported Nelson Mandela's ideals since the very start of apartheid. These pacifist values

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<sup>24</sup> S. Chan, *The Commonwealth in world politics: a study of international action, 1965-1985*, Lester Crook Academic, 1988, p. 10.



correspond perfectly to the missions that the Commonwealth leaders meant to manage all over the world. It is important to add that the name of the Commonwealth of Nations will also remain attached to this sensitive political endeavour that in a certain manner shaped our modern world. Furthermore, the generosity of spirit that is promoted by this free organisation constantly incited its free member states to prove the geopolitical role of the Commonwealth as a great leader that devotes its energy as well as all its human and material resources to guarantee the everlasting existence of the most vulnerable countries when other similar organisations would fail.

We also need to note that the countries which used to be colonised by the United Kingdom are inclined to make trade unions with other former colonies, with contrast to the kind of exchanges they might have with other non former British colonies and the Commonwealth is present where it is necessary to foster such a communal trade system. One of the purposes of this strategy may be linked to the survival of the Commonwealth as a geopolitical and as an economic force in several regions and in other words, this would positively increase the influence of the Commonwealth on an international level. In different countries across the planet, the Commonwealth of Nations progressively established a reliable scholarship programme that is still viewed as a standard of education in many major countries. The Commonwealth remains autonomous in terms of finance for it does not ask other non member countries to help and develop its smart projects for its poorest members and in a sense, it is simply considered as a pioneer in this area.

In the years ahead, we could hardly imagine the Commonwealth being disbanded because of a lack of presence in the international scene as its curiosity reached each continent and we have to recall its numerous representatives who are active everywhere. The Commonwealth focuses on applying its agenda for all of its old and newer members and the various methods which are used each year contribute to accelerate the development of global trade, sport, health and economy, etc. Besides, the political landscape kept on changing after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). Many considerations are included within the Commonwealth's international affairs since the southern countries are encouraged to manage the South-South trade in order to sustain a continuous evolving economic network. The Commonwealth additionally takes into consideration the potential constraints that could be encountered during the planning for further financial projects.

Moreover, in order to make all these positive projects concrete, the Commonwealth made it a priority to fight corruption in and with most of its members, especially in Africa; the



Commonwealth Secretariat helps governmental investigation units to find out about the factors leading to an economic failure and eventually to spot the 'cheaters'. Thus, it is clear that the Commonwealth leaders are fully aware of the dangers that may result from maladministration and fraud. Thus, the whole world benefited and is still benefiting from the contributions of the Commonwealth as this international entity wrecks the obstacles that hinder and undermine the capacities of emergent countries for it encourages young men and women to fully exploit their potential and skills to run their own micro-enterprises. Thanks to the Commonwealth's devotion for such projects, many African businessmen and women are learning to work together in order to contribute in the growth of their countries economically and also to absorb joblessness and that is the key issue that is threatening so many countries since several years.

### **2.3. The Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations**

Since our work primarily focuses on the United Kingdom and on the Commonwealth of Nations during the Second World War (1939-1945), the United Nations have to be mentioned. In addition, the United Nations' foundation is more complex than it seems and basically, we have to come back to the First World War which lasted from 1914 to 1918. This heavy scourge decimated entire nations and it was the principle reason that eventually led to the creation of the League of Nations<sup>25</sup> and its Council established five major world powers as permanent members.

These countries were helped by other members who were very influent at that time and it should be underlined that The League of Nations promoted free vote and similarly to the Commonwealth of Nations, the League of Nations' Secretariat used to organize frequent meetings in an attempt to highlight peaceful ideas, fearing another major military cataclysm.

However, the creation of the League of Nations progressively met some setbacks and the main issue was that among its main members, two permanent ones, Japan and Italy were viewed as aggressors since they respectively joined Nazi Germany in its fight against the allies and as we have mentioned above, that provoked the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

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<sup>25</sup>The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organisation founded on 10 January 1920 as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations) on April the 13th 2017, at 15:08.

Hence, the disappearance of The League of Nations seemed to be inevitable for it was ineffective politically and it has to be highlighted that fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia, while Japan invaded Manchuria.

At that time, economic sanctions were not applied correctly on such countries and the members of The League of Nations could have never been able to thwart war because they did not agree on key points. Further, similarly to the Commonwealth, The League of Nations was founded on the basis that war was a great mistake and it could be avoided through constructive negotiations between the countries that would be involved in a given conflict.

After the predictable Second major world conflict, many nations understood that the creation of another more solid League of Nations was a priority and that the latter would be called the United Nations. This time, the political settings were different as most of the European countries cherished the idea of living peacefully with all their neighbors. So in consequence, it became much more reasonable to cooperate globally to achieve national peace, security, and economic serenity for next generations. The United Nations have always promoted a collective action against world unrest or any other major threats; if we take a look at this organization's blue flag, we would see a depiction of our planet which is shown as a precious, united element that is surrounded by two olive branches symbolizing peace and tolerance. Contrarily to the League of Nations, the United Nations were created right after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), following the collapse of the German Third Reich.<sup>26</sup>

The whole world was reemerging from that historical disaster and now, it was the role of the United Nations to guarantee that no other nations would be maimed by any powerful aggressors. Indeed, several nations had to unite in a way or another because of all the waves of fear and guilt that were brought by the barbaric killings of the Second World War (1939-1945) and clearly, those atrocities revealing the dark side of human nature had to cease and supposedly, the birth of the United Nations was the diplomatic alternative to repel all that despair. As far as the Commonwealth of Nations is concerned, we have to keep in mind that after the foundation of the United Nations in 1945, countries like New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom were initially given three votes. It is also interesting to note that as the

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<sup>26</sup>J. E. S., Fawcett , "The Commonwealth in the United Nations," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, (Vol. 1, No. 2), pp. 127-130.

United Kingdom launched a vast campaign of decolonization, these countries became permanent voting members of the United Nations.

In terms of integrity, the image of the United Kingdom within the United Nations even improved, since in the period between 1946 and 1959, this country freed many of its colonies. As a result, those votes increased by four because countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Ghana joined the group in question. In a sense, the United Nations promoted the idea of independence and that largely contributed to decolonize even more British colonies. Thus, in the period between 1960 and 1969, the United Kingdom decolonized the following countries: Cameroon, Singapore, Barbados, Malta, Botswana, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Cyprus, Mauritius, Swaziland, Guyana, Zambia, Maldives, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Jamaica, Nigeria, Malawi and Lesotho. In addition, from 1970 to 1979, Britain granted independence to Samoa, Bahamas, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Grenada and to Dominica.<sup>27</sup>

That huge independence wave continued in the period between 1980 and 1989. Effectively, the United Kingdom chose to decolonize the following countries: Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Brunei Darussalam, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe, Belize, Grenadines and Saint Vincent, as well as Namibia. Hence, many other overseas territories such as Cayman Island, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Caicos Islands among others followed and from a political standpoint, it can be assumed that the influence of the United Nations was stronger than ever after that decisive choice. Great Britain was inextricably going to decolonize all its former colonies and since the foundation of the United Nations, the United Kingdom decolonized around 80 former colonies which is indeed, an impressive score.

Furthermore, the United Nations encourage weak countries to defend their interests economically, socio-politically, etc. As we have already explained above, the consequence of decolonization was that each freshly decolonized territory was given the right to self-govern itself as those countries had different political motivations as well as specific aspirations. In addition, we can assume that the United Nations played a major monitoring role to make sure the latter would meet their goals.

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<sup>27</sup> P., Brendon, *The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire*, Vintage, 2008, pp. 415-481.

Besides, the adhesion to the Commonwealth of Nations enhanced the interconnectedness of this network even further and we have to know that the Commonwealth enjoys a voting power within the United Nations since the creation of the latter. In effect, this started with the foundation of the International Monetary Fund<sup>28</sup> and the World Bank in 1944. Moreover, the cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations exists roughly since 61 years and these exchanges encompass the development of trade, security and of course, the law.

It seems clear that the power of the Commonwealth allows its members to be heard at the United Nations and the strength of the Commonwealth apparently resides in the great number of its member states because at each official committee, the United Nations rotates presidency. It is mathematically logic to understand that when Commonwealth countries are included in a committee of 15 other neutral voting countries, the United Kingdom and its partners would have a greater chance to be elected for the presidency of the committee. Furthermore, both the United Nations and the Commonwealth are committed to tackle acute issues which the weaker countries may encounter. Indeed, both organisations openly advocate pure values of democracy and equity among countries and this can only increase a country's confidence regarding its political and economical future.

As far as world economy is concerned, the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations respectively set barriers to stop or at least limit corruption around the world because that represents a huge financial loss for international banks and hence, for governments. In a sense, both the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations bring various countries together and chronologically, the Commonwealth can be viewed as a precursor in that regard. Besides, both organisations had the wisdom to bet on exactly the same values of maintaining international co-operation, peace, and justice.

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<sup>28</sup> The International Monetary Fund is an international organisation headquartered in Washington, D.C. It includes 189 countries working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. Accessed from: <https://www.imf.org/external/about.htm> on April the 13th 2017, at 15:22.

We can currently assume that it is thanks to such ideals that political breaches have been systematically avoided almost all over the world, albeit some occasional conflicts that neither the United Nations nor the Commonwealth of Nations have been able to have control. Moreover, since the United Nations promote many similar aspirations, this highlights even more widely the actions of the Commonwealth and that might be an additional reason that would incite other countries to adhere to the Commonwealth in the future. In contrast with the Commonwealth, the United Nations include 193 member states, although the process of membership is still different, not to mention that debates may vary but goals are more or less similar and it will not be surprising to see the United Nations and the Commonwealth fructifying even further their partnership through an international trusteeship system in order to issue useful recommendations for a given group of countries.

In fact, the appeasing role that has been constantly played by the United Nations is considered as a crucial landmark which reinforced the presence of the Commonwealth as a global peace maker that affectionately broke cultural barriers to reaffirm its strong will for beginning a new peaceful era that consists in having constructive exchanges with the free member states, as well as with other potential economic partners who would be active actors within the United Nations' Committee. The advent of the British empirical attitude certainly helped the Commonwealth as a group of free and sovereign nations to be somehow approved by the international community and we need to know that the Commonwealth members' representatives swear an oath to uphold those unchanged democratic values, so as to devote their energy to tackle the coming challenges where we assume, the contribution of the United Nations will be needed.

In addition, since the spearheads of the Commonwealth go hand in hand with the general aims of the United Nations, this might ultimately contribute to the growth of the Commonwealth of Nations in the international political scene in the coming few years for its achievements would be reverently regarded as vivid examples of success whether politically, economically or culturally.

### **2.3.1. The UK and the Commonwealth of Nations (the British Vision)**

We have no doubts about the fact that the United Kingdom is a country that has continuously set higher objectives regarding the numerous aspects that were linked to its power as an Anglo-Saxon figure. History clearly shows that the British Monarchy was very tempted to influence other countries through its ideas of military expansion and besides, some

centuries ago, sedition promoters were either killed or extradited, so as to foil any form of resistance quickly. Furthermore, as we have already explained in our first chapter, the British expansion was achieved because of several political motivations. At a certain stage of its history, the United Kingdom had to undertake important actions, in order to impose its culture and customs but also to strengthen its local economy and armament. Thus, all the necessary ingredients were available to transform this isle country into a colossal power machine; the British dynamism really contributed to spread that philosophy of exploring other territories, as we know that expansion led to colonialism.

After the independence of many of those colonies, the Commonwealth of Nations was created but it was still British in essence. It may be argued that the Second World War (1939-1945) was a key factor for freeing former colonies as the United Kingdom emerged weak from its conflict with Nazi Germany and this can only lead us to assume that the British would have probably never decided to decolonise the numerous countries it used to have control on. Indeed, this was a very crucial element if we want to focus on the British national identity because the decolonisation process was a quite sensitive question, with regard to the “Britishness” of that declining empire. Here is another useful information, many historians maintain that the project of decolonisation, especially in the African continent which took place between 1959 and 1963, was the main cause of the gradual vanishing of the British presence internationally.<sup>29</sup>

These thoughts haunted the British elite who viewed decolonisation as a pure disaster. Even the simple British citizens started to think that their country could no longer afford being as powerful as it used to be and hence, it becomes obvious that the idea of creating the Commonwealth of Nations was forecasted to peacefully invite former colonies to stay in the British Empire, but as mentioned before, the latter would no longer be submissive to the orders of the British Crown. It is important to note that the British desperately needed to reassure themselves, as to the extent of their military power across the globe so their huge Empire transformed into an international free association that supposedly aspires for the same goals. Great Britain effectively lost a unique Empire and she was still looking for an adequate role that would prove she was doing its best to stabilise its peaceful image among its new partners.

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<sup>29</sup> T., MacDonald, *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, Methuen Publishing Ltd, 1986.

One other fact was that the British could have opted for a more radical solution for they could have either continued to impose colonialism on the aforementioned countries, or leave them without having the slightest remorse. Nonetheless, compared to the French coloniser for instance, the British had a different attitude and their culture incited them to adopt a teleological vision which consisted in planning for the years to come, after 1945. We may also think that the dissolution of the British Empire was great news for the former colonies but in reality, that simply marked the beginning of a new and decisive geopolitical reconversion programme and similarly to Great Britain, other major European powers also withdrew their troops, as well as their political control over their colonies. We believe that the United Kingdom would have been stigmatised by those powers, in case this country did not decolonise as well.

Since 1946, the British influence over the Commonwealth of Nations reverberated via the fostering of the diplomatic relationship that gathers the United Kingdom with the remaining countries belonging to this international entity, although the word British was omitted from the name of this organisation in that same year. We may add that the British had a sudden collective consciousness right after the process of decolonisation because the purpose of creating the Commonwealth of Nations coincided with an evolving British empire that was still looking for new goals to reach, in terms of expansion and economic interests. Moreover, the United Kingdom was not really ailing to find raw materials however, the Commonwealth, as a group of countries, offered such a resourceful amount of territories that the British Crown decided to promote an unprecedented spirit of political openness and the objective behind such a strategy was that the Commonwealth of Nations would be as decisive in world politics as the United Kingdom itself.

The former British coloniser was thus trying to offer as much independence as possible for the countries he used to dominate. Furthermore, the United Kingdom did its best in order to reflect its positive image throughout its initiative of creating and reconciling a unique club of countries that would indirectly serve its multiple interests. The British approach may be viewed as clever, in the sense that the colonised countries did not envisage a future without Great Britain and this is a very crucial element, as far as our study is concerned. Indeed, the Commonwealth bonds with the United Kingdom are diverse and her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II never misses an opportunity to visit various former British colonies, to promptly show the determination of her country for sustaining an everlasting peaceful relationship and



amazingly, the Commonwealth became so attractive that in modern days, the latter entails foreign countries that were never colonised by the British.

As we know, the Commonwealth of Nations conveys ideas that suit the British political elite. We may even consider that the Commonwealth is a sort of reincarnation of the conquering Britain who once meant to rule the world by bridging different continents and embracing multiple ethnicities, as well as major faiths. The avant-gardism of the British gave them a realistic insight about the future of their relationships with a significant number of other countries, as the Commonwealth membership gathers various emergent countries which economy is growing rapidly and other technologically advanced nations. The British optimistically accepted the challenge of decolonisation after the Second World War (1939-1945) and as a whole, Great Britain was seriously worried about the future of its empire after 1945 and the Commonwealth allowed it to act as a political advisor within this readymade structure.

The Commonwealth of Nations certainly guarantees a brighter future for the British nation, as the latter will probably play a crucial role in its development and also in its defence. The United Kingdom is aware of the changing political landscape we will be living in, so this country is doing its best in order to develop new ways that would contribute to add new strong values, which will correspond to each old and new member of the Commonwealth of Nations and this international entity would be another means to sustain British political aims all over the world. The Commonwealth could additionally help the United Kingdom to sign new trade agreements with major countries and the goal behind this would be to prioritise an intra-Commonwealth economic network. As issues may be encountered, the British probably plan to promote bilateral protection programmes so as to guarantee a perfect military collaboration between their country and the remaining members of the Commonwealth.

We suppose that many reforms will be needed to achieve such long-felt goals and that is one of the reasons that incite the British to propose a renewal of the Commonwealth structures through the numerous organisms that it includes; it could be predicted that these organisms will increase in number in the coming years, similarly to the number of free member states. One other major detail is that the British always tried to diversify the activities of the Commonwealth by devoting the adequate individuals and the perfect material resources where needed. Paradoxically though, we may pretend that the British Empire was never as momentous as it is now, despite the fact that her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II reiterates the promotion of independence for the countries involved, whenever she visits a given member of



the Commonwealth and this may also be regarded as one of the benefits of such a membership.

The British truly aspire for huge projects, as far as the Commonwealth of Nations is concerned and their philosophy lies in inviting the free member states to constantly participate in the development of common foreign projects. What is more is that the British community views the Commonwealth as a peaceful political group that bridges the gap between the rich and the poor countries, regardless of all the cultural and religious barriers that would have constituted an obstacle to such a union and from another perspective, the other countries which belong to the Commonwealth reported the fact that despite being subjects of the British Crown, their citizens were not allowed to live and work in the United Kingdom. This privilege seems somehow natural for such countries, as they have closer exchanges with Britain but we may argue that since the rapprochement of the United Kingdom with the European Union, there has been a heavy restriction on this regard.<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately for some Commonwealth citizens, the United Kingdom only offers them the status of Visa Nationals, like any other foreign traveller. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom seems willing to discuss such issues and this situation might enhance in the future. The British insist on acting perfectly in line with the guiding principles of the Commonwealth, in an attempt to prove their good faith and historically, this is another manner to acknowledge for the crime of colonisation. Basically, anti human rights abuses and the promotion of democracy were predetermined by the United Kingdom so as researchers, we may wonder whether the Commonwealth is really able to plan various agendas, without the general supervision of Britain. In fact, the British had to be role models for the Commonwealth citizens and they even prompted the free member states to compete severely, inviting them to remain in good standing and those countries had to combat all sorts of inequalities that would run rampant in other less motivated countries.

All these initiatives are very constructive for the Commonwealth of Nations and hence, for the United Kingdom itself, for it was Britain who created the Commonwealth, not the opposite. Besides, it is felt that countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada enjoy better advantages, as opposed to other southern countries for instance and that is probably linked to the common history that links them to their British ancestry, yet we also know that

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<sup>30</sup> P., Boyce, *The Queen's Other Realms: The Crown and Its Legacy in Australia, Canada and New Zealand* (Sydney: Federation Press, 2008), pp. 170-177.

the United Kingdom invests a significant amount of money to reassure the smaller countries which are concerned about their future as weak members of the Commonwealth. Part from that, it has to be mentioned that the political clout is crucial for the United Kingdom because the Commonwealth originates from its own political principles. However, many British citizens assume that the Commonwealth causes a heavy cost on the households and they regularly ask their government about the benefits that the Commonwealth of Nations really has to offer for Britain.

### **2.3.2. The Changes within the Commonwealth of Nations**

As we have already mentioned earlier, the British Commonwealth of Nations was created after the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and that was a key element, as far as the history of dominions is concerned. Indeed, that declaration brought the equality in status between them and the United Kingdom. Such a decisive right was ratified later in Section 4 of the Statute of Westminster back in 1931 and on this respect, we have to precise that before the adoption of the Statute of Westminster, the dominions used to be called the Newfoundland, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Union of South Africa, the Dominion of New Zealand and the Irish Free State. As we know, that was a pivotal moment in modern world history because the Balfour Declaration brought new rules regarding the British foreign policy. The Commonwealth really made sense after the publication of the Balfour Declaration, since the latter mentioned crucial morals terms and conditions that contributed to create the modern Commonwealth of Nations.

After this declaration, many issues have been taken into consideration and as previously noted; the alternative of maintaining peaceful relationships with former colonies seemed to be the most appropriate choice that the British could make. In consequence, the dominions were given many useful rights among the one of becoming members of the Commonwealth of Nations freely. The Commonwealth was progressing as a new and strong unity group of free nations and similarly to any other organization, the Commonwealth of Nations was doomed to encounter impediments and to experience certain alterations. Whilst Great Britain and the new free member states were establishing their rules for the sake of the betterment of their partnership, certain countries unfortunately rebelled against the principles of the Commonwealth and hence, indirectly against the will of the United Kingdom.

Various countries of the Middle East initially decided not to apply for the Commonwealth membership, similarly to the Republic of Ireland and we have to understand that contrarily to many of the former colonies which accepted to owe allegiance to the British Queen from the beginning, others radically refused to show any further submission to the declining British Empire. The fact of remaining under British influence was also viewed by certain countries as a real sacrifice over their sovereignty and one of the well known examples of such a rebellion was that of South Africa because the latter decided to leave the Commonwealth of Nations back in 1961 and it is believed that one of the reasons of its withdrawal was linked to the fact that Britain did not allow this country to become a sovereign republic, after it made many insisting requests for that purpose.

However, following the democratic elections that took place in South Africa back in 1994, the diplomatic tension decreased between the latter and the United Kingdom. As a result, South Africa adhered again to the Commonwealth of Nations and decidedly, that was not the only change that occurred within this international association because we have to mention that Pakistan was no longer a member in 1972. Indeed, this country made the decision to leave the Commonwealth after other member states recognized Bangladesh as an independent country. Although that political issue persisted, Pakistan came back to the Commonwealth in 1989 and we have to understand that when countries did not choose to leave the Commonwealth, it was the aforementioned association that asked them to withdraw and the reasons for such a change were different, depending on each member country.

Unfortunately for the Commonwealth and for Britain, it was not an easy task to impose new legislative rules on those volunteer countries, since they were still adopting a more or less hostile attitude towards authority, law and order

many similar incidents took place. If a country refused to adopt an internal policy that responds to the noble values of the Commonwealth for example, the latter would be dismissed from the organization in question, until it agrees with the Commonwealth morals. It is also interesting to mention that the Commonwealth was composed of different countries having generally conflicting aspirations and that was a burden that the United Kingdom needed to tackle properly in order to guarantee the survival of the Commonwealth and inclusively, its own image of peaceful moderator. Such problems would naturally make the membership

criteria senseless, as these countries ‘pretend’ agreeing with the conditions of the Commonwealth first, after adopting a different policy.<sup>31</sup>

Luckily enough, there was a diplomatic threshold that the member states needed to respect but in reality, the Commonwealth was overwhelmed by the recurrent political crises which were rampant in most of its member states. Still in this regard, we have to evoke the Fiji Islands’ case because this country was evicted from the Commonwealth in 1987. Besides, one has to know that Fiji Islands witnessed a military coup which had put an end to the morals of the Commonwealth in this country. Many similar cases were reported and the Commonwealth had to strategically manage such issues, in an attempt to avoid the expansion of this ‘contagious’ phenomenon because otherwise, the number of its members would be seriously reduced and that would be irrelevant in the next decades. Basically, any country that does not fully respect the democratic values and principles of the Commonwealth of Nations would be inevitably suspended from this political circle, until the latter overtly shows its sincere will to adopt democracy.

By the same token, it should be added that as a former colonizer, the United Kingdom often urges the most recalcitrant members of the Commonwealth not to colonize other nations and the British insist on encouraging the Commonwealth free member states to make their own political choices in order to promote the socio-economic facet of this international entity, rather than envisaging to militarize it any further. Even though peace is one of the major values upon which these countries agreed, the Commonwealth remains a group and this includes the obligation of making regular compromises, to satisfy each free member. In addition, it would be a disastrous failure for Britain if one of the Commonwealth member states goes on war against another member, as it would mean that both the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth nations did not manage their mission seriously.

The other encouraging factor is that despite suspending some reluctant countries, the Commonwealth orients such countries towards free elections, democracy and human rights and this clearly shows that the main motivation of this organization has always consisted in promoting its pacifist ideas and peaceful values, instead of collecting more members. However, since globalization suppressed many cultural and historical obstacles, it seems like the Commonwealth of Nations might renew its invitation for Europe to join its network. We

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<sup>31</sup>J., Keegan, *The Second World War*, Penguin Books, London, 2005, pp. 103-588.

are conscious that the Commonwealth of Nations played a crucial role during the Second World War (1939-1945) and that fruitful contribution saved the United Kingdom from a certain chaos, so many years after its creation, the Commonwealth with the support of Britain, sought to make Europe a major free continental member that would help Britain to explore new economic possibilities.

That idea was ostensibly smart for we know that the European Union was partly created to prevent the emergence of another Nazi Germany and also to promote a peaceful economic and military exchange between all the European nations. Thus, similarly to Europe, the Commonwealth was forming an ambitious group of nations that were looking for a better future and that incited the British and the other free member states to promptly invite Europe to join in; most historians would pretend that it was a common idea but it clearly shows the will of the British to reassure Europe with regard to its membership in the Commonwealth on the one hand and also to prove its eternal political bonds with Europe. In that perspective, the British government that was led by Prime Minister Anthony Eden opted in 1956 and in 1957 for the “plan G” which basically referred to the economic growth of Britain and of the Commonwealth.

The aim of such an ambitious plan was to have a huge European free trade zone that would also guarantee the privileged status of the Commonwealth within Europe and from a historical point of view, it would have been strange as if not odd to have a country such as Germany within the Commonwealth of Nations but we also should state that the British government envisaged asking sovereign Scandinavian and other northern European countries to join the Commonwealth of Nations, since Britain wanted to build a unique common European market that would align with the economic policy of the Commonwealth. Surprisingly, Britain was so determined to achieve that strategic goal that in October 1956, the British Prime Minister Eden met with Guy Mollet, his French counterpart to plan the membership of France in the Commonwealth.<sup>32</sup>

If France accepted the deal many decades ago, the Commonwealth would have transcended the European frontiers and consequently, that would have allowed Britain to lead Europe as an economic major power. Furthermore, that would have shaped a totally renewed Europe if Germany also accepted to join the Commonwealth, as its members grew in number; this

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<sup>32</sup> Retrieved from <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-history>. Accessed on September the 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 13:12.

international organization aspired for even bigger projects so it celebrated its solid unity through sport and that also contributed to grant these nations an exclusive friendship that inculcated better values for their citizens. If we compare the modern Commonwealth to the older one, we inevitably notice a strikingly different evolution because this group of nations is less and less British in the choices it makes, whether in terms of politics or in terms of social reforms.

The Commonwealth definitely changed after the Second World War (1939-1945) for its members no longer viewed Great Britain as an oppressor but rather as a member in great depression and as opposed to the past, the United Kingdom is no longer considered as the main member who elaborates new key measures etc. The Commonwealth currently speaks internationally and that means that it is perfectly autonomous when necessary decisions have to be made. There are withal far more positive factors that gather these nations around common interests as well as common goals to reach. This evolution is truly unique and we need to add that the Commonwealth of Nations was part of the British Empire but now, this organization has the potential of becoming a worldwide empire, even though some experts tend to argue that as long as these countries owe allegiance to the British Queen that does not prove their real independence.

Objectively though, we have to remember that these countries share more or less the same history and that Britain was their main colonizer, so considering this common heritage, it is intricate to imagine the withdrawal of the Queen as an emblematic figure of the Commonwealth. Over and above, the Commonwealth of Nations incites its citizens to feel privileged to belong to such a united group of nations and in order to foster that influence even further, the Commonwealth Foundation<sup>33</sup> organized the annual Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1987 which gathered the best writers of the countries that are part of the Commonwealth. This also proves that the Commonwealth progressively viewed science and knowledge as a priority and that this organization meant to bet on the next generations regarding various aspects. This is a prerequisite factor that would logically ensure the continuation of this free organization, despite the occasional changes it may experience.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation that was established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1966, a year after its sister organisation, the Commonwealth Secretariat. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth\\_Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_Foundation) on April the 13th 2017, at 15:39.

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth\\_of\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations), accessed on February the 6<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 17:25.

Among other important changes, we should mention that people used to ignore about some of the activities that were regularly managed by the Commonwealth of Nations but that was until the number of free member states increased and as opposed to the past, the Commonwealth values and principles are now supported by both developed and poor member states. Each member state is apparently aware of the role it has to play within the latter group and compared to the older version of the Commonwealth of Nations, currently, new creative and original initiatives are no longer exclusively proposed by the United Kingdom for many emergent countries are represented by eager businessmen and women who sought to create new economic and ecologic solutions that could even inspire companies that are based in other countries of the Commonwealth.

This chapter offers a positive insight on the developments that were seen in the United Kingdom right after the end of the Second World War in 1945. We needed to tackle the Nazi question as the geographical proximity between Germany and Britain was a detail of major importance at that time. We also focused on the Commonwealth of Nations and on the various activities and values it promotes all around the world. In fact, this chapter is fully dedicated to the new world that was born after the crucial contribution of the Commonwealth during the Second World War (1939-1945). The conclusion for this chapter is that the creation and the progression of this international association were very beneficial for the survival of the United Kingdom which relentlessly meant to stand against Nazi Germany. This chapter also focuses on the post Second World War relationship both Germany and the United Kingdom shared.

The next chapter regards the recent evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations from the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) to 1990. It will allow us to discover more facts on this international association. Examples of some of the challenges that may bewilder this free organization should be mentioned for this might give us a better understanding of the type of relations the member states share. Our last chapter may also give us a general overview of the pertinence of the Commonwealth's actions and projects because as researchers, we genuinely aim to learn more about the future missions of the Commonwealth of Nations.

**CHAPTER 3 : THE MODERN AND**  
**FUTURE ROLE OF THE**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS**



This chapter illustrates the progress that was made by the Commonwealth of Nations internationally. Therefore, we have decided to deal with the efforts that this free organization has made from the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) to 1990. What may be regarded as a certainty is that as a wide group of willing countries, the Commonwealth does not make everyone agree with the solidity of its intents, neither does it convince some analysts about the importance of the role it plays all around the world, ever since its original foundation. Regarding this matter, we are focusing on the disappointments that may have been felt by some of the free members' representatives. We want to tackle the question of the Commonwealth's relevance and quality as a world mediator and negotiator. Some of the issues it encountered and still encounters are obviously mentioned hereunder. However, as this work primarily focuses on the survival of the United Kingdom after the Second World War (1939-1945), there is a part that exclusively informs us about the responsibility that this great country constantly needs to maintain on the organisation that it once created. This last chapter also focuses on the Commonwealth's prospects and future.

### **3.1. The Commonwealth of Nations from 1945 to 1990**

We cannot deny the fact that after the end of The Second World War (1939-1945), daily life was continuously changing across the world and that was without contest due to the numerous historical events which took place in various countries. In fact, various nations were either involved directly or indirectly in the aforementioned conflict. Whilst the war with the Nazis was over, the allies and particularly the Americans meant to hearten their partners to bet on a future pacifist Germany that would be rebuilt upon the Marshal Plan; the latter consisted in industrializing Germany rather than making it an agricultural land but the Soviets did not agree with the American's vision as they were planning to impose their military presence in the eastern part of defeated Germany. Many other political tensions and other inevitable brawls had risen between both nations and naturally, the abyss grew until the Cold War out broke between the ex Soviet Union and the remaining allies.

It was the first non-military conflict that the world was going to witness and intelligence services had to deal with numerous challenging surveillance tasks, so as to avoid a third major war. However, as far as our study is concerned, we have to precise that Great Britain was

among the allies who had a westernized political vision that would go hand in hand with the American's, in the sense that she eagerly voted for the Marshal Plan because it envisaged a much more serene atmosphere with its German neighbour; most of the allies were thus ready to offer the olive branch to Germany once again, in an attempt to anticipate and abort any forthcoming conflicts and to assert the Allies' political philosophy. As we have mentioned earlier, in the late 40's, many occupied countries were becoming independent and consequently, the relations that Britain used to have with The Commonwealth of Nations were fated to change permanently. In addition, there is no shortage of disagreement within the fact that after the Second World War (1939-1945), Britain was again subjected to another political issue that started to divide the realm's political class but this clash of interests was only due to the divergence of opinions of both the Americans and the Soviets and it may be argued that such political concerns prevented the United Kingdom from managing its relationship with the modern Commonwealth with more confidence.

The evolution of the Commonwealth was decidedly riddled with other conflicts including those which were encountered by the United Kingdom and historically, that might probably be construed as a key factor regarding the quick evolution of the modern Commonwealth of Nations. This international organization correspondingly accompanied the United Kingdom in almost each of its decisive political marshes and in order to sketch the significance of the existence of the Commonwealth internationally, we have to mention fundamental examples such as the Canadian one. Indeed, the Commonwealth of Nations helped this big American country to evolve politically and economically through many years, particularly in the period between 1956 and 1965. More precisely, the Commonwealth has served as a mediator between the Western powers and the new free members of this political organization in order to contribute into the construction of qualitative exchanges between them.

As we may know, the United Kingdom had to prove its unswerving support for the American vision regarding the future of defeated Germany and accordingly, Europe's. We can also assume that the goals of the British were altered by the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) as its policy increasingly became Europe-centered, after the start of the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> The political influence of the Commonwealth of Nations developed further when *the*

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<sup>1</sup>The Cold War was a state of geopolitical tension after World War II between powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its satellite states) and powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, its NATO allies and others. Accessed from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) on April the 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 15:44.

*Suez Crisis*<sup>2</sup> took place in Egypt, back in 1956 for its free members were agreeing to accept dealing with their first African partner. The Commonwealth of Nations is arguably among the most interesting institutions in terms of international progression because earlier, the United Kingdom and this international entity had to create various opportunities and to manage the growth of their free member states as the aim was to become more visible internationally but many years later, the prospect of the Commonwealth became oriented towards inspiring for the creation of similar organizations that would only contribute to reinforce the will for applying the Commonwealth recommendations across the globe. The Second World War (1939-1945) heavily transformed Europe and the Commonwealth of Nations needed to adapt to a world carrying a dark evolution and clearly, after the independence of India in 1947, the Commonwealth entered a new era and it is now considered as being the modern Commonwealth.

This international organization also continued to provide a fruitful basis for openness and democracy without any reserve and the fact that various countries were also given their independence only proves that the Commonwealth was not a mere imperialism relic, as the latter has little authority over its free members. The Commonwealth is plainly responsible for many positive actions that have been done both in Africa and in Asia, so it is without contest the promulgator whence peaceful agreements are signed between depressed countries. The Commonwealth cannot be compared to an organization such as the United Nations but in this uncertain world, security has simply become an unaffordable luxury in some countries and it has to be added that since 1945, the United Kingdom continued to struggle with an inevitable decline in terms of geo-strategy.

During the 1960's, the main aim was to foster the exchanges of the developed members with those who were struggling economically. It was apparently not a new paradigm for this international group but politics was continuously tensing and both the British and the French were concerned about the future of their respective communities in Egypt and in some other African countries. The creation of the Commonwealth of Nations definitely helped Britain to maintain an unquestioned leading role in the whole world. However, the British had to make a harsh choice regarding the relationship they share with their European neighbors as well as with the remaining countries of the planet but that did not prevent such a nation from keeping high pretences over many ulterior events. From a typical British perspective, it becomes clear

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<sup>2</sup>The Suez Crisis was an invasion of Egypt in late 1956 by Israel, followed by the United Kingdom and France. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez\\_Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Crisis) on April the 13th 2017, at 15:55.

that the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was among those intractable politicians who suggested that South Africa would be far better without apartheid. Mrs Thatcher was naturally against apartheid, yet she was also controversial in some of her political decisions for she expressed her staunch sympathy to the South African regime and in addition, she urged the Commonwealth not to impose further economic sanctions against this country.

It was without doubt a manner for Mrs. Thatcher to peacefully prompt South Africa to dismantle apartheid and to move away from any form of racial segregation. Some analysts even pretend that Thatcher's opposition against imposing trade sanctions on South Africa in Nassau, in the Bahamas, back in 1985 was negative for the United Kingdom and for the remaining countries of the Commonwealth. Indeed, such debates and measures divided the British parliament and brought a sort of distrust among British politicians who were seriously involved in the optimization of the Commonwealth of Nations. In fact, it has to be stated that the Apartheid issue provoked a much heated debate among different African leaders whom countries were permanent members of the Commonwealth. We also need to consider that both Australia and Canada expressed their will to impose more economic sanctions on South Africa because of the lack of justice and the outrageous situation in that country, regarding human rights.

That situation increased diplomatic tensions between many free member states and most notably, the Commonwealth leaders occasionally had to seek for a clever consensus. Notwithstanding the loathe she used to have regarding apartheid, Margaret Thatcher is considered as one of the rare British politicians who took a solid stand both against apartheid and against severe economic sanctions which she viewed as being merely useless and it is obvious that Thatcher's attitude was a key factor for the strong support of the Commonwealth for the peaceful political transition of South Africa. Moreover, instead of contributing to estrange foreign investors from opting for expanding their business in that country, the Commonwealth of Nations rather tried to find feasible solutions in order to heal South Africa's depressed economy. Despite the controversy surrounding his arrest, Mandela vividly expressed his sympathy for Margaret Thatcher's political philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

It is widely assumed that the United Kingdom was still being represented by a severe Prime Minister woman who did insist on considering the British opinion whenever a new

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. H., Glennerster, *British Social Policy 1945 to the Present*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 23-76.

Commonwealth project would emerge. This does not necessarily mean that the United Kingdom was being the center of all the Commonwealth diplomatic operations, yet, the role of the British was quite fundamental as far as South Africa's relief is concerned. In addition, some sources may argue when pretending that finally, the British still viewed their freshly independent partners as being their protectorates anyhow. Nonetheless, we have to understand that the United Kingdom is perforce an intricate member of this great international institution and it is not a sheer matter of British obduracy but a country such as Britain must in some specialists' view, show its full support to the Commonwealth of Nations and the latter has to facilitate the autonomy of each of its members.

We have no doubt about Britain's capacity to continue imposing its role as a world leader as many politicians lambasted it for that but no doubt has to be harbored about the strong will of Britain and the other free member states regarding the positive evolution of the Commonwealth. After 1945, the Commonwealth of Nations progressively changed and this also translated into a mutating population; more precisely, as the number of free members (India and Pakistan in 1947, Sri Lanka in 1948, Ghana and Malaysia in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, Republic of Cyprus, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda 1962, Kenya 1963, Malawi, Malta, Zambia 1964, Gambia, Singapore 1965, Barbados, Botswana, Guyana, Lesotho 1966, Mauritius, Nauru, Swaziland 1968, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga 1970, Bangladesh 1972, Bahamas 1973 etc), grew amazingly faster after 1945 and following the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the immigration rate increased inside the Commonwealth. Those immigrants essentially came from West India and most of them deliberately chose to move to the United Kingdom in order to improve their living conditions. However, most of them hardly managed to enhance their professional situation since Britain itself was still looking for economic solutions and one of the main problems that this country was facing was the lack of qualified immigrants. We can trace back this period to 1959 when some areas in Britain became overcrowded, compared to others and the prospects of accessing a better life seemed to be farfetched and similarly to the European Union, people who were looking for higher wages decided to leave their native countries in order to seek for better jobs or for a more secure environment and most of them simply chose moving to the United Kingdom. The Commonwealth certainly allowed that sort of immigration but then, some countries began to adopt new policies that were established to limit the immigrant population from growing any further on their soil.

The immigrants were allowed to travel to the United Kingdom under the traditional rights of the Commonwealth citizens, yet the developed nations belonging to the Commonwealth decided to add some conditions so as to attract the 'suitable' immigrants. Nevertheless, on another perspective, the Commonwealth refused to systematically deny its multi-racial society because after all, that was directly implied by the old or newer members of this political entity. Besides, such humanitarian restrictions would have probably incited many countries not to remain within the latter organization. So, it seems quite clear here that this issue was particularly sensitive and that the Commonwealth needed rather more strong members than continuously leaving contenders and it would be safe to assume that the Commonwealth is thus frequently subjected to a relentless pressure on this regard.

Exodus matters are considered as a well-known phenomenon whenever numerous countries are included within a common group of nations sharing similar ideals and ironically, most of these Commonwealth immigrants only considered travelling to the United Kingdom, instead of envisaging a trip to other developed countries such as Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia or even Malta. This also highlights the influential image that was still enjoyed by Britain after 1945 and that simply indicates the degree to which the United Kingdom was viewed as a pioneer member of the Commonwealth of Nations; it would be very controversial if the Commonwealth ends up imposing heavy restrictions upon its growing members. Indeed, this international organization needed to act painstakingly to sweep away any disquieting issues that could prevent it from making further progress in terms of strength and international visibility.

In other words, Britain needed to remain powerful and after this country entered the European Union in 1973, it became obvious that the British could no more act in an imperial fashion, simply because that age belonged to the past and that mentalities started to evolve all around the world. However, in such a complicated context, the United Kingdom always needed to face the unpleasant consequences of its former imperial age for this country had to combat its enemies to keep control over the Falkland Islands, in 1982. We also have to note that Hong Kong remained a British dependency after the signature of a historical agreement between China and Britain but unfortunately for the British; that treaty ended in 1997. Although it was rapidly expanding, the Commonwealth of Nations was encountering various changes and other problems with some of its members between 1960 and 1970 but this group

of nations had to hold on well against those humdrum obstacles so as to make sure all its free members would be connected to the same network, whatever their history may resemble to. <sup>4</sup>

### **3.1.1. Criticism regarding the Commonwealth of Nations**

It is easy to understand that the years following the Second World War (1939-1945) were so special and so terrific that the world's population envisaged betting on new priorities. As we have already explained earlier, every family and each individual living in a European country viewed their own lives as being worthier than any other issue. In a sense, Europe emerged deeply traumatized from that second world conflict and in the United Kingdom, the British may have emerged victorious from the war in question, yet the cost of such a prowess was as heavy as the relish of final victory. At present, we may confidently argue that the creation and the evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations still constitutes a pleasant experience for most of its free member states and more importantly, for the United Kingdom which remains the main contributor for such an organ.

It seems as though the Commonwealth of Nations' primary goal is to offer the opportunities for its members to stay in touch without necessarily having to bind formal obligations and in this insight, the understanding of this entity's role remains confusing for some researchers. The other certainty is that the British as well as the other represented nations meant to highlight the values that we have already evoked; the latter primarily reinforce the idea of promoting peaceful exchanges between countries having different cultures and customs for the sake of building an even stronger group of nations sharing a relaxed environment including political rest and reciprocal trust between all members. Indeed, similarly to the European Union, the countries that decide to join the Commonwealth of Nations are rather more attracted by the fact of keeping their own sovereignty while becoming a full free member of the latter.

It may never be mentioned enough but during several years, the Commonwealth has been prone to some criticism with regard to its genuine role internationally, for some doubts were overtly expressed surrounding the true relevance of the Commonwealth of Nations. Those who defend this international organisation would probably support their judgement by arguing about the timeless values and principles of the Commonwealth and some pro-Commonwealth

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<sup>4</sup> For more details see I.R.G., Spencer, *British Immigration Policy since 1939: The Making of Multi-racial Britain*. London: Routledge, 1997, p, 13.



analysts also tend to assume that despite our changing world, the role of this international organisation remains intact, since 1949. After all, the Commonwealth stands apart, compared to other international organisations, in the sense that human dignity is really placed at the core of its project. We obviously have to take into consideration that the Commonwealth of Nations increasingly defended democracy and the rule of law since 55 long years.

In fact, the countries that wish to join such a political entity primarily need to aspire for diversity and the Commonwealth, supervised by the British, always sought to prove to the public that its members are not just symbols of post-British imperialism as the latter occasionally make interesting proposals in terms of social enhancements and also regarding economical solutions. Despite all the criticism, it has been subjected to; the Commonwealth of Nations has often proven to be an excellent leader concerning key issues like non-communicable illnesses, international debt and many other such crucial matters. The Commonwealth's main principle is also to include younger generations into the sustaining of any upcoming key event or project and as we have already mentioned, the Commonwealth played a crucial role in isolating apartheid regimes but confusion still surrounds its international missions.

More often, the average individual would pretend that the Commonwealth is a purely British relic or a peculiarly British consolation prize for the loss of Empire. In a sense, this may be viewed as a historical pretext for the United Kingdom to keep control on its former empire and in terms of numbers, the Commonwealth gathers more than 54 member states, among which only 31 are listed as small states. In other words, this means that although the reluctance of certain specialists, these smaller states are those which matter most within the Commonwealth of Nations. Naturally, we have to underline the fact that this great organisation has been created to attract as much free member states as possible, so consequently, the numerous emergent countries that are part of this international entity are vividly encouraged to stay in.

As we have seen, it is a commonly known fact that the Commonwealth does its best in order to allow developing countries accessing more wealth and also to share a much richer economic experience. Nevertheless, other criticisms are rather more linked to the virtual absence of the United Kingdom whenever new laws or measures are debated before any further adoption. In addition, the Commonwealth has to sort out non conformism issues in the sense that any despot leader would inevitably be accountable for their political conducts, as



far as their country remains a full time member of the Commonwealth of Nations. In fact, the moderated policy that is very often promoted by the Commonwealth is mostly regarded as a weakness; many analysts firmly believe that despot leaders have to be strictly objurgated by the remaining members of the latter entity.

In general, other nations do not give credit to the Commonwealth for being a serious peace promoter since they assume it is the United Nations' job.<sup>5</sup> We evidently need to understand that some confused members, mostly African countries, do not seem to agree with the text of the Commonwealth Charter on the one hand and on the other, criticism regarding the Commonwealth primarily focuses on the reason behind the creation of this international group of nations and also on its real political role. By the same token and as students, we may as well be tempted to wonder about the real motivations of the United Kingdom for the next decades, regarding the free extension of the Commonwealth. Currently, the Commonwealth is no more considered as a world reference in terms of military power, simply because we no longer live in the age of warring empires and hence, those who criticise the Commonwealth's policy could be considered as pro-militarism, which of course, is not at all in accordance with the philosophy of the latter organisation.

Nowadays, the Commonwealth of Nations has no common army so this may be the reason why critics continuously regard it as a weak organisation for some military conflicts are apparently predicted by numerous specialists for the next decades. This world certainly needs more friendship and comprehension but as a matter of fact, the reality is utterly otherwise. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth of Nations is also viewed as a neo-imperial conspiracy that relentlessly invites small states to gather under its pacifist flag yet throughout their frequent meetings, the Commonwealth leaders try to show off the vibrancy of their various actions but apparently, this is not impressive enough for its numerous detractors who are not convinced about the sheer relevance of this international group of nations. On this regard, we may consider the criticism that has been made about the fact that the essential of the free members of the Commonwealth of Nations are impoverished countries that are still quite dependent economically and which survival may directly depend on their membership within the Commonwealth.

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<sup>5</sup> D., Ingram, *The Imperfect Commonwealth*. London: Rex Collings, 1977, pp 103-107.

Militarily, the critics rely on the Nigerian example because they insist on the fact that Nigeria was among the first dissenters of the Commonwealth of Nations as this country did not look for military support from its Commonwealth friends to face the deadly civil war which lasted from 1967 to 1970 on its soil. Instead, this African country called for help from the ex U.S.S.R who offered it logistic support as well as efficient weapons. The Commonwealth would only serve as an identity marker, no more, no less and that is at least the assumption which is made by some specialists. After all, some may assume that the Commonwealth of Nations only tries to justify its 'strange' existence because they blame its absence in most geo-political events taking place across the globe. Despite these harsh criticisms, the popularity of this international entity remained high as its members grew in number incredibly fast throughout the years.

We have to add that the Commonwealth organises an optimised yearly scholarship programme as well as other development projects for its most needy members. Other critics conversely argue that the Commonwealth can never succeed in sustaining its international policy which promotes diversity, simply because the latter gathers 70 different organisations that belong to various countries and the language barrier frequently causes ineffective bureaucracy and that is one of the main factors that foil the Commonwealth's evolution. One may think that such scholar programmes are not accessible for every student and that inevitably contributes to reinforce social inequalities and cast segregations, as is the case in India; each of these theoretical positions makes an important contribution to our understanding of the educational evolution of the modern Commonwealth of Nations and we cannot predict the disbanding of the Commonwealth but the existence of this group of free nations could be seriously jeopardised in case its policy makers do not manage to find the suitable arguments or solutions to improve their club in the coming future.

Currently, some non-member countries certainly do not grasp the value of the Commonwealth but this entity has lots of potential to offer, thanks to its diverse members. Indeed, the Commonwealth often refuses membership for countries that do not respect human rights, especially in terms of freeing politician opponents, yet whenever the totalitarian country in question is already one of its members; the latter organisation does its best in order to promote a more peaceful communication, rather than imposing direct sanctions. This criticism is very often made by many people because decidedly, this situation is quite confusing for member states as well as for neutral states.

Social freedom and the freedom to protect individual privacy for the Commonwealth citizens are crucial in order to avoid the growth of extremism and radicalization among member countries. Moreover, jailed politicians and outcast individuals who plan to return to their native country can benefit from a more or less similar freedom. We naturally concede that the Commonwealth of Nations is committed to remain cautious regarding such issues because this allows it to prove that it fully respects its charter and this strategy encourages other states to consider cooperating with it. Authoritarianism does not correspond neither to the Commonwealth's principles nor to its partners', regardless of the numerous criticisms but the Commonwealth of Nations does need to thwart any attempt from its free member states who would plan to adopt a hypocrite politics within this group of nations because the real issues would be the fact of pretending to defend the core values of the Commonwealth, without applying them in their own countries.

Hence, most criticisms mention the ease to violate peaceful standards by some Commonwealth countries and for that particular reason; the Commonwealth's executives have to keep a watch on the countries which are considered as being "at risk". The Commonwealth is currently under scrutiny because in some of its members, powers are still not separated and most of the laws are repressive against independent journalists. This might incite activists and critics to denounce the lack of police oversight within most of the Commonwealth members. In addition, this intergovernmental organisation is frequently accused of indifference regarding tyrannical members whose judiciary system is heavily corrupt. No need to even mention the cases of unfair imprisonment for opposition leaders in many African countries and finally, the Commonwealth is criticised for not adequately managing new projects because apparently, nothing really changed since its original creation.

Furthermore, the political tensions that existed between some of its key members unfortunately decreased interest among other nations for the Commonwealth and regarding this element, one has to consider the fact that the United Kingdom supported Pakistan when the latter was trying to take over Kashmir against the will of the Indian government. In a similar fashion, Pakistan criticised the Commonwealth for its biased judgments regarding votes defending the creation of a country like Bangladesh and other comparable cases pushed some countries to definitively cancel their membership or not, depending on the interests that they may be targeting. Among many other tense relationships within the Commonwealth, the

United Kingdom and Rhodesia also had differences politically back in 1965 and consequently, Rhodesia decided to withdraw from the Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.2. The Disillusion of some Member States

As already pointed out, the Commonwealth of Nations has been created in order to gather as many volunteer countries as possible but like many other intercontinental organizations, confrontations are sometimes quite inevitable between some key members. At the start, the United Kingdom really prompted its former colonies to invite other nations in, yet against all expectations; those countries were having troubles to adapt to their new 'privileged' situation. So, in order to reinvent itself even faster, the Commonwealth of Nations offered them the chance to forget about their colonial past and to unite their skills and wealth (human and natural resources) in order to build a unique coalition of free and perfectly determined states that would convert their roles for the sake of the Commonwealth's population welfare. The understanding of the conditions upon which the Commonwealth is based is an introductory element that gives us an interesting insight about the circumstances surrounding the growth of the Commonwealth.

Given the importance that is granted to wealth within this political entity, the numerous countries that used to be directly under British authority were gently invited by the United Kingdom to contribute into the building of projects belonging to the latter organization. Nevertheless, some recalcitrant leaders considered this policy as being pro developed countries and they pretended that the United Kingdom was rather having a cheeky attitude when antagonizing them to constantly furnish effort when they knew that the British were increasingly focusing on the reconstruction of their own country. The other Commonwealth members (be them former colonies or not) felt that the United Kingdom was not giving the adequate example and here, it can be thought that those criticisms were caused by the British political line of thought. Furthermore, the paradox is that after the 1950's, Britain was keen on encouraging the Commonwealth members to make sacrifices so as to meet a brighter future for this shining organisation.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. V.I., Lukpata, *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 2, No 4, December, 2015, pp. 10-15.

Annoyingly, many of those member states were already struggling with economic issues and they assumed that they could rely on the help of the most advanced countries belonging to the same organisation but in reality, the Commonwealth incites each of its members to bring a rich contribution for the advantage of the whole community, yet many Commonwealth colleagues were being disappointed by the unfair distribution of wealth, especially the countries near the Caribbean Sea. Again, it has been indicated that twelve Commonwealth Caribbean countries had to opt for a single candidate who would represent the whole archipelago during official meetings and one other important problematic was linked to the British baroness because in Britain, the aristocratic society still viewed Great Britain as the main leader of this wide organization and that meant that there were still faithful sympathizers of the former British empire which primary goal was to achieve an implacable territorial expansion.

The Commonwealth of Nations' symbolic image is verily in accordance with the fact of unifying efforts to reach a particular goal, despite the fact that it has never been an easy task for the Commonwealth of Nations to concretely unify all its members. Similarly to the European Union, the Commonwealth is obviously constituted of various countries which do not necessarily share the same political or economic background. This crucial factor is unfortunate for such a seemingly united group of nations and effectively, this even influences the Commonwealth of Nations with regard to the choice of the candidates who might be the most eligible to lead the majority votes within the latter. The preponderance of the poor African countries in the Commonwealth really has to be taken into consideration since most of these countries have to sort financial debts and it seems like the Commonwealth cannot afford to sweep away all their problems.

In a sense, the developed countries of the Commonwealth assume that such economic flaws could only contribute to prevent the latter organization from making further progress and respectively, most African and Asian countries tend to judge the Commonwealth as being a greedy entity that pretends promoting equality, tolerance and understanding between nations. The Commonwealth's ambitions remain purely political, although tacitly economic, for a great importance is granted to education, freedom in votes, democracy, religious and cultural dialogues and exchanges. The Commonwealth Secretariat is perfectly aware of the precious value of the collective strength all these countries can bring to the Commonwealth. On another level, most African countries are suffering socially because of the terrible lack of

medical infrastructures so it can be assumed that the Commonwealth still needs to prove its good will in this field.

It is also important to note that the Commonwealth can be compared to a family that is terribly torn between the gifts it wishes to offer to its members and the real priorities which it needs to respect scrupulously. Its agenda requires many decades of preparation so we may wonder if this organization will be able to prove the sincerity of its intentions or if some of its needy member's speculations will prove to be right. As we know, economically, the Commonwealth of Nations' priority consists in increasing the growth of wealth and offering the guarantee of prosperity for all of its members. Nonetheless, despite this fair and inclusive economic policy, many African, Asian and American members felt that wide disparities still existed between them and other free member states and that these so called values and principles were merely a cliff-hanger to attract them and encourage them to join in.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the Commonwealth Secretariat privileged offering technical assistance for these countries so as to get rid of unequal living standards between all the members of the Commonwealth, yet a lot remains to be done because many free member states really suffer from an ailing economy and in order to sustain a bigger capacity in terms of cooperation between all these nations, the prerequisites have to be taken into account. Besides, a lot of African members felt quite disheartened about staying within the Commonwealth of Nations and that is the reason why the other members of the Commonwealth (in general) and the United Kingdom (in particular) have to react positively to sort out this unpleasant situation. In fact, they can endorse some of the demands of the depressed African countries, by promoting the intra-Commonwealth trade even further.

Otherwise, there would be no equitable profitability between the Commonwealth members, especially those of the Dark Continent. This may seem very promising but an increasing number of African countries have still serious doubts about the benefits that they are supposed to receive, after many years of misery and civil wars and consequently, we may think that from the start, the Commonwealth of Nations has been divided into two main categories of nations: those which are already successful economically and those who bemoan their current situation without having the opportunity to look ahead. In effect, the Commonwealth has led a

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<sup>7</sup> R., Renwick, *Unconventional Diplomacy in Southern Africa* Basingstoke: Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1997, p. 144.

draconian work regarding this as that abyss would have created more tensions between the numerous Commonwealth citizens and still regarding the African continent, the Commonwealth is undoubtedly crucial for the economic growth of countries such as: Seychelles, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria.

We also have to remember that almost twenty of the Commonwealth's members are African and of course, we are not pretending that this group of nations has higher priority over the others but it is certainly the one that has more potential to offer within this political entity. In terms of human resources for instance, these African states appreciably contain a staggering number of active people and roughly two billion people live in the eighteen African member states of the Commonwealth. It is amazing to think that in the years to come, Africa will become a central zone for the Commonwealth trade but that may include some risk taking for many of these African states and we forecast that they will probably need to sacrifice today for a better tomorrow, instead of focusing on useless criticisms towards the Commonwealth's actions. The success of these African countries would be priceless because during centuries, Africa has suffered a lot from slavery, tyranny and racism so the Commonwealth is therefore regarded as a reliable source of prosperity and blossoming change by some African members.

Furthermore, northern countries always coveted both its human and natural resources to the detriment of the entire continent's population and this is probably one of the numerous reasons that led to the African scepticism on the Commonwealth of Nations. Despite these prejudgments, both Africa and the remaining Commonwealth countries seriously need to bet on the burgeoning African youth because all these nations' leaders have to understand once and for good that when the tide rises, all boats, whether big or small, rise with it. Ideally, these African countries have to ensure that their leaders as well as their population utterly embrace the noble values of the Commonwealth, similarly to other countries such as Canada, Malta, Australia and the like and of course, that would encourage other Commonwealth partners to focus more on Africa.

In addition, some other countries simply felt useless within this international organisation and they also had a platitude view upon the Commonwealth, in the sense that they derided their own capacities because their economic situation eventually remained the same, even after they became free members but the real problem is that some countries only wait to receive financial help from the other participants when the better would be to contribute further into the building up of the economic success of the whole group. Even if this may



seem to be purely fantasist, we tend to assume that it will be a matter of time, before basic goals can be reached. Fortunately though, the countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Nations can partly rely on the (CFTC) which allows them to manage their country's ownership.

Since the Commonwealth has become a modern organisation, the role of this common fund is to offer a financial assistance to such countries but only when needed; the Commonwealth also urges its members to show a lawful and faithful engagement economically because clearly, that is the key to going further and farther, towards success. Through this fund, the Commonwealth promises its smaller members to experience a faster economic growth. In other words, it is a long term sustainability issue which had to be solved through such a financial programme because it is thanks to the latter that many of these countries have been able to get rid of their financial debts. Moreover, remaining closely faithful to its basic values, the Commonwealth includes gender equity within any economic project and since many poor African countries were disappointed by the Commonwealth at first, they can be thankful to this same organisation for its considerations regarding their economic future.

The answer of the Commonwealth as a solid group of nations was the promotion of south-south trade so as to guarantee a long lasting support for these depressed members. Concretely, the Commonwealth took action by employing long and short term experts whose role is to monitor and offer financial solutions for these countries, on demand and according to the degree of financial need they may have to sustain their development projects. This programme also includes twinning initiatives between rich and poor member states so as to diversify trade activities and to secure these nations' local economy. Hitherto, the Commonwealth may have been absent on the mainstream media, yet this political entity seems to be well informed about the evolution of each of its members. Unfortunately though, whenever a country does not manage to be patient enough, their political leaders create polemical among their neighbours, meaning to discredit the organisation which may be, took a lot of time before responding to their legitimate demands.

The other disillusion regards the incapability of the Commonwealth to eradicate corruption and political intimidation towards weaker states and its latency to alleviate the burden of debt for them. It is clear that the Commonwealth's budget is not necessarily sufficient to cover all its members' needs and that is one of the reasons that incites the Commonwealth to increase its financial independence. Otherwise, that would only bring more quarrels and tensions



between the developed countries and those which may feel deprived from the help they were promised.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2. The Relevance of the Commonwealth of Nations

The Commonwealth of Nations is assumedly here to serve humanity. At least, that is what most of its free member states pretend since its creation. We may never mention it enough but it is a combination of democratic values, freedom across the world, racial and gender equality and other such principles. Indeed, the Commonwealth really holds on its magnanimous philosophy and does its best to impose this policy to the global community throughout the years. As researchers, we do not doubt that the Commonwealth of Nations will remain closely linked to the United Kingdom and that is a key factor, as far as international relations are concerned, yet the modern Commonwealth embraced new goals, independently from the British who once founded it and we may also wonder about the sheer relevance of the Commonwealth within our modern world.

In reality, the economic abyss has become increasingly important between a large number of countries in the planet and the Commonwealth plays a pivotal role regarding this issue but that is obviously limited to its own member states. As an example, the relevance of this group of nations shines in a county such as Malta because effectively, the fact of belonging to the European Union does not even prevent this country from devoting its energy to the Commonwealth of Nations for Malta has achieved many appreciable objectives because since 1958, this little European country has led the (COMNET-IT) and the latter has championed the development of the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide<sup>9</sup>, as well as many other important meetings. Malta hence proved to be an active member of the

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<sup>8</sup> See W. D., MacIntyre, *The Significance of the Commonwealth*. Macmillan, 1991, pp. 47–51; and W. D., MacIntyre, *British Decolonization, 1946-1997*, Macmillan, 1998, pp. 119-122.

<sup>9</sup>The Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide is the building and strengthening of ICTs capacity in member countries of the Commonwealth. This programme aims at enhancing information accessibility within and outside the Commonwealth countries. Retrieved from:  
[https://books.google.fr/books?id=kLx5T\\_OoZqoC&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=The+Commonwealth+Action+Programme+for+the+Digital+Divide&source=bl&ots=R35eUFvJOH&sig=a\\_G-yBG-x2r\\_ikrVIwlkb5-oQ84&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjty\\_md2JjUAhUEPBQKHWD9BIQQ6AEIWTAG#v=onepage&q=The%20Commonwealth%20Action%20Programme%20for%20the%20Digital%20Divide&f=false](https://books.google.fr/books?id=kLx5T_OoZqoC&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=The+Commonwealth+Action+Programme+for+the+Digital+Divide&source=bl&ots=R35eUFvJOH&sig=a_G-yBG-x2r_ikrVIwlkb5-oQ84&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjty_md2JjUAhUEPBQKHWD9BIQQ6AEIWTAG#v=onepage&q=The%20Commonwealth%20Action%20Programme%20for%20the%20Digital%20Divide&f=false) on April the 14<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 13:34.

Commonwealth of Nations, since 1964 and we have to precise that it is one of the three European member states of the latter organization.

More interestingly, Malta has won four medals in the Commonwealth Games, so it can be argued that this country is among the most active members of this international group of nations. In addition, and as we may have already explained, a large number of the countries belonging to the Commonwealth are developing their respective economies very fast and it is good news for the relevance of the Commonwealth because we can assume that prior to their membership, these emergent countries were still having troubles with their finances. Without contest, this privileged relationship allowed the transfer of technology and knowledge towards these disadvantaged countries. We also have to mention that more than 3 billion dollars of global transactions are registered yearly within the whole Commonwealth of Nations and that almost each of the free member states saw their combined (GDP) double from 1980 to 1990. This economic growth is not insignificant, for it is naturally forecasted to continue to expand by over 16 per cent in the next decade.

Although the Commonwealth is rather more economy-oriented, it also provides a neutral space within which all its members can exchange, meet and even argue as equals. Another argument would be that the Commonwealth of Nations is becoming a paramount organisation that so many other countries would like to join in. This voluntary association is open to suggestions since its free members are given a better chance to be heard internationally, compared to the supposedly wider meeting room of the (UN).

The fact remains that the successful achievements of the Commonwealth are not necessarily brought up widely. In fact, many non Commonwealth members are still confused about the real role of this volunteer association. Currently, many problems remain quite visible in many of the free member states. Nonetheless, the United Kingdom reassures the international community about the advancements that have been made so far. Despite all the criticism this organisation has been subjected to, it never envisaged to cease its humanitarian activities in the five continents and obviously, this triggering philosophy allows this group of nations to stand united and to continuously strive for bigger projects so that to gain more visibility internationally. The relevance of the Commonwealth also lays in the fact of making so many different cultures meet together and of course, that can be considered as a key factor against racism, oppression and religious stigmatisation.

It can be assumed that no other such organisation could ever pretend to proceed the way the Commonwealth of Nations does because it has long been viewed as a driving force towards a better understanding of both the western and the oriental worlds whose interests are rarely the same. Some thinkers may assert that this is not a revolutionary club but it certainly contributes to revolutionise the world of tomorrow, in terms of humanism and positivity. In order to further its various aims, the Commonwealth has to rely on all its members, old and new because as we know, positive actions and noble values of freedom allowing different communities to live together peacefully are unfortunately under assault. The Commonwealth of Nations could be compared to a big country that tries to sort out and manage many issues at once. We should add that the Commonwealth is still at its heyday because its multi-polar power distribution really allows it to grow in an unexpected manner, in the sense that this group of nations can afford resisting to other external forces economically, socially and militarily, if necessary.

The Commonwealth is also quite relevant in terms of medicine, scientific research, law, sport and in other forms of divertissement because specific budgets are frequently and exclusively devoted to reinforce its various structures through its numerous member states and certainly, most former British colonies still feel that they all share a sentimental attachment to the British culture. Be it fair or not, the English language is used by almost all the free member states who naturally share common educational and judicial systems and this commonality is not surprising. The fact of using the same language simply provides strong bonds for this vast community and the relevance of the Commonwealth is vividly seen in currency arrangements, common development projects, trade and major investments, population management, sports and migration organisations. In addition, the Commonwealth Secretariat which was established back in 1965 plays a central role regarding the facilitation of such diversity and the latter helps to loosen cooperation between the free member states by simplifying administrative approaches.

That consequently led to cement the relationship between northern and developed Commonwealth members with many Asian emerging countries which represent an incredible source of wealth. The other major factor that proves the strong relevance of the Commonwealth is its ability to transform from a selection of former colonies into a solid group of entrepreneur nations that seek to benefit each other, as long as it remains feasible. After careful consideration, we would explain that it is not a matter of altruism but that these nations became conscious about their combined force and the fact of compensating each

other's flaws. Criticisms regarding this organisation's relevance may tend to denigrate the persistent British intrusion or more precisely, the inevitable British influence over the remaining member states and many detractors would argue that the United Kingdom can never be considered as equal to its former colonies, even though the latter does its best to reconcile with them and also to encourage them adopting a peaceful attitude towards themselves. Besides, Britain forcefully had to find a role within this group of free nations because it would be extremely awkward if the founding country decides to leave such a paramount entity and it is a well known fact that this is no more a purely British or European sphere of power but it is becoming a lively and perfectly autonomous group of countries that wish to reach the same goals, even though, each country's politics may certainly differ.

The example of Africa is not insignificant since it is frequently cited by the Commonwealth and the main reason would be the fact that the citizens of African Commonwealth countries enjoy an important patronage in their trade and transactions.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, we know that relevance rhymes with perseverance and this means that the Commonwealth has continued to show its solidarity with any state that may be having a political crisis without interfering politically, yet it finances and helps the latter country to over-pass any complicated situation.<sup>11</sup> The Commonwealth is an organisation that claims to be modern. In other words, it encourages and supports scientific research and it even provides tutors to countries that lack qualified teachers in schools and as an example, British teachers were once sent to Nigerian schools because after the civil war that Nigeria had gone through, its schools were seriously lacking teachers; afterwards, Nigeria also meant to contribute financially during the regime of General Yakubu Gowon.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, this African country increased the access towards scholarship for many Commonwealth students within its university in a will to sweep away barbaric violence and give the priority to knowledge and social betterment and this clearly indicates the solidarity

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth-in-action/economic-development-2/>. Accessed on November the 21<sup>st</sup> 2016, at 14:07.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Z., Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: 'Race' and 'Race' Relations in Post-war Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 109-113.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623528.2014.936700?scroll=top&needAccess=true>. Accessed on April the 15<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 14:17.

such an organisation instils to its members. Of course, Britain still plays the mother's role within the Commonwealth and metaphorically, this can be depicted by the presence of her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II in many of the Commonwealth isles and countries; she is like a mother who keens on keeping a watch on its former colonies and after all, if one of the Commonwealth members feels that this organisation has neo-colonial tendencies, the latter would rather quit immediately but reality shows that most of these countries are apparently satisfied with the Commonwealth's political independence with regard to the British historical dominance, even though we also have to evoke another crucial element.

As we have mentioned before, the Commonwealth of Nations has chosen to establish its Secretariat in London, so this additionally contributes to spread the feeling of unfairness among many of its component members and indeed, the British ubiquity may finally tarnish the reputation of this group of nations as the Secretariat in question is located at the Marlborough House in the British capital. We may eventually add that this is a former Royal residence which Queen Elizabeth II had symbolically offered to the Commonwealth of Nations, because of the fact that she is the Head of the Commonwealth. On such a basis, we could potentially be tempted to think that the essential of the Commonwealth policy still resides in the United Kingdom and that despite all the benefits and the wealth this international entity actually creates, the modern Commonwealth certainly became a tacit excuse for the British to continue enjoying the 'monopoly' of their former colonies, yet with all the development that is going on, it would be interesting to patiently observe the Commonwealth's activities in various countries and make a provisory judgement.

The fact that it monitors elections in the countries that may be viewed as less democratic than others naturally strengthens the relevance of the Commonwealth of Nations. Furthermore, the Commonwealth does not only make transactions within its own members for it also signs important trade contracts with international associations such as the World Trade Organisation and this guarantees that its numerous compound members benefit from allocations and other similar advantages.

### **3.2.1. The Commonwealth of Nations' New Challenges**

Our modern world is full of unpredicted events or coincidences and as we know, history constantly repeats itself, so for this main reason, the Commonwealth of Nations creates interesting opportunities for its free member states and this initially contributed to attract even

more contenders who planned to join this intercontinental organization in order to benefit from many advantages that encompass: economy enhancement, military protection and cooperation, a stronger education for students among many other social offerings. It can be genuinely mentioned that the global mission of the Commonwealth is no easy task since it plays a guidance role by advising all its members, including the United Kingdom about the manner they should manage their human and natural resources, meaning to sustain a smarter economic development and the Commonwealth has so many issues and challenges to deal with that it often needs to adopt a case by case policy.

Most of the member states of the Commonwealth seriously suffer from poverty, delinquency and drug trafficking problems. For instance, African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria were so needy that they respectively received a great technical support from the United Kingdom and Canada; even the different bodies of the United Nations helped both countries and they still help them till date. Part from that, the Commonwealth of Nations has to encourage its members to unite further in order to ease the development of cooperation within its growing network. In addition, the Commonwealth has to mind the good distribution of wealth and this obviously encloses industry productions, sponsorship, product sourcing and the constant research of raw materials and for the northern countries of the Commonwealth, Scientific research and development projects have to be transferred to the southern free members as well. In this insight, we have to add that the Commonwealth intelligently manages its evolution and economically, this multinational organization makes efforts to sustain a cancellation of debts for the nations that are regarded as HIPC. Many of these countries are actually members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

On another regard, a country like Nigeria is important for the Commonwealth and hence, for the United Kingdom. Indeed, one million Nigerians live in England and at least ten thousand of them live in Canada. As a result, Nigerians and other African and Asian nationalities can be found in almost each Commonwealth country and this includes the Pacific Ocean region as well as Fiji. It is naturally the case of many other nationalities as we can find them in various Commonwealth countries, yet Nigerians are among the Commonwealth citizens who can be found everywhere. This means that the Commonwealth of Nations as a whole community of free members must adopt common measures in order to loosen the citizenship conditions of its diverse populations so that to avoid bureaucracy in many of its member states. Moreover, this intricate question is linked to the fact of allowing all the Commonwealth citizens to travel in the Commonwealth region of their choice but it is never that simple and the

Commonwealth aims to play a significant role regarding its southern members, in the sense that it tries to promote the “can do” spirit among that population. African Diaspora is a visible problem and this organization has to encourage the African populations to stay in their respective countries so that they contribute actively in the development of their own economy.<sup>13</sup>

On a global perspective, the Commonwealth might suffer from a communicational problem with some of its southern members. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we know that poverty really sets a serious impediment on the greater projects that the Commonwealth plans to sustain further in the Dark Continent. Thus, in order for the Commonwealth to survive in Africa, it needs to solidly impose its principles and conditions on its member countries, especially those which do not share the same colonial history with Britain. In fact, that could lead to a deep diplomatic crisis and the Commonwealth Secretariat cannot afford to suspend many of its members. That would effectively reflect a weakness within the latter organization and it could prevent the Commonwealth from becoming a strong international entity that exclusively relies on the quantitative presence of its free members.

The Commonwealth of Nations created itself easily, partly from a British initiative and it could as well destroy itself because of a general confusion that may scatter its noble values. One significant challenge the Commonwealth has to face is the need to constantly encourage businessmen and women to invest millions and even billions inside the Commonwealth rather than employing their money elsewhere and the potential investors have to be convinced by the various Commonwealth bodies because after all, the aim is to sustain this group of nation's economic success. In addition, the Commonwealth has to show its determination to focus on each of its members' interests and this also includes the United Kingdom itself. The Commonwealth also has to prevent the United States of America from imposing despot regimes in the southern part of Africa, in order to foil them from establishing their oil lobby in countries that may be linked to the association.

Of course, the British and the Canadian influence respectively play a primordial role, as far as bilateral relations are concerned, particularly with the United States of America and the Commonwealth has to curtail potential quarrels occurring between Britain and some of its

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<sup>13</sup>A.J.R., Groom and Paul Taylor, *The Commonwealth in the 1980s: challenges and opportunities*. London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 205.



former colonies because that would inevitably besmirch all the positive actions that have been made so far by the remaining compound members of the Commonwealth. Human rights and the free distribution of wealth as well as power have to be frequently supervised because otherwise, there would be no fair economic order within the Commonwealth. Part from the independence of the Commonwealth from Britain, the remaining members of the Commonwealth have to gather their efforts to find political concessions over some positions of Great Britain on certain issues meaning to guarantee above all, the continuation of their free cooperation.

This lenient attitude is the cornerstone of the basis upon which the Commonwealth has been founded and this has even inspired other institutions like the Spanish Speaking countries, La Francophonie, as well as the Lusophones<sup>14</sup> which all follow the example of tolerance of the Commonwealth of Nations and such is the power of this wonderfully organised entity. In the years to come, the Commonwealth will also have to become even more powerful politically because the challenges it will encounter are supposed to multiply by the next decades. Thus, in order to develop politically, this organisation really has to consider the under-representation of women, especially in Africa and indeed, some countries reported an increase of gender inequalities and this problematic is frequently debated by the Commonwealth representatives. However, the solution would be to systematically include women in the fight against poverty, climate change, joblessness, business opportunities and in many other decisive civil sectors.

In the near future, the population of the Commonwealth of Nations is likely to change in terms of age and the support of its youth will become even more crucial because unfortunately, many younger individuals seem to ignore about the motivations of the Commonwealth. Since the Commonwealth is a melting pot in terms of culture and ethnicity and also in terms of wealth and technology, this organisation will have to remain attached to its original principles, despite the changes that will potentially occur into the latter because some key members may decide to leave, when others may consider joining in. The Commonwealth Secretariat may additionally issue new rules or conditions so as to guarantee

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<sup>14</sup>The Lusophones are the countries, regions and communities which are linked to the Portuguese language. This includes countries like: Angola and Brasil(the latter is the most important lusophone country with over 200 million inhabitants). This community additionally includes the following countries: Portugal, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and East Timor. Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lusophone>. on April the 15<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 14:23.



the everlasting of this club and as we have mentioned earlier, the standalone priority which can also be considered as a challenge is the survival of the Commonwealth of Nations within a world which is constantly changing.

In the dark continent, peace is also a huge priority for the Commonwealth which encourages most of its member states to quit weapons counter band; and it is comprehensible that these actions and other great projects will have a colossal cost on the Commonwealth's budget for by 2030, many experts predict that this international organisation will have to shell out between 260 and 1,400 billion dollars annually. The Commonwealth will also have to improve its cooperation with NGOs and other worldwide ecologist groups that work hard to protect our planet from climatic disasters. Its free member states have to be even more united, despite their cultural, economical or social differences and in addition, we have to mention the challenges that regard illegal immigration as it will certainly become one of the most visible issues in many of the Commonwealth countries. Unlike other countries, the Commonwealth members have to deal with illegal immigration internally and of course, amicably because this matter concerns both recipient countries and those from which illegal migrants come. <sup>15</sup>

Still regarding this problem, the Commonwealth of Nations has to prevent the brain drain phenomenon by providing decent job opportunities for qualified individuals who may be tempted to travel outside of the Commonwealth's frontiers, seeking to improve their life. If the Commonwealth does not tackle this issue seriously enough, that would damage it in terms of human resources. Moreover, immigration would become a common solution for numerous people coming from various Commonwealth countries and it becomes obvious that the Commonwealth needs to manage its population, especially in its smallest states so that this issue remains internal. On the other hand, it has to be stated that the Commonwealth contributes into the economic development of other industrialised nations that are not among its members as most doctors and engineers working abroad originally come from Commonwealth countries such as Grenada, Dominica, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and St Vincent, among other small member states.

The Commonwealth also has to make its regular meetings more effective, in the sense that slackly members should be warned, while active ones have to be complimented and praised,

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<sup>15</sup> N., Mansergh et al. *Commonwealth Perspectives*, Duke University Press, North Carolina, United States, 1958, p. 164.

in order to foster unity and motivation inside this group of nations. Besides, the Commonwealth constantly needs to remain focused on education and scholarship because the number of teachers in some of its countries may overpass the one of other member states so the latter organisation has to encourage its members to recruit and exchange teachers, in a will to build experience around teaching. Most often, richer Commonwealth countries eagerly engage teachers coming from other member countries to show their support for their united club of nations and one has to precise that the Commonwealth of Nations has brought the initiative of establishing a Teacher Recruitment Protocol that contributes to develop scholarship globally and that educational system has been used by Commonwealth as well as non Commonwealth countries; this is effectively quite encouraging for the Commonwealth since its method inspires other nations across the globe.

Our world has metamorphosed in just a few centuries so in the future, the Commonwealth will have to make smart decisions diplomatically and economically. Otherwise, its reputation may be affected and that would consequently ruin the chances of the United Kingdom to play its role which consists in moderating its policy and actions around the world. One other major factor is that the Commonwealth is not indifferent from adopting urgent reforms when it is necessary to do so, since that is the key element that would grant it more respect from its numerous members. Nonetheless, there are other important issues that the Commonwealth of Nations needs to deal with and if this group of nations does not intervene, that could jeopardise its very existence. As an example, global pandemics are frightening to such a degree that the beleaguered nations need to benefit from a full medical support for their populations, or else, these countries would seek for medical help from non Commonwealth members and that would mean that the Commonwealth is not capable of sustaining a strong medical programme for its own members.

In other words, the Commonwealth's actions have to remain strictly confidential and internally protected so that no foreign interference occurs between its richer members as a solid group and its smaller states which are viewed as being more vulnerable. It really has to remain the Commonwealth for the people with all the devotion for the principles it preaches since 1931 and in the near future, we may notice the worth of these initiatives. Other challenges are related to crucial issues such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, NEPAD development issues etc. And as we know, all these scourges are commonly seen in the Third World countries that are also part of the Commonwealth of Nations (among these countries, there are: Botswana, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius,

Rwanda and Nigeria. This free organisation should additionally sustain universal primary education and enhance birth rate management as well as health care institutions in each of its free member states by providing them with the newest medical equipments in order to improve life expectancy while reducing death rate.

These issues have to be dealt with very strategically because each member state has different ways of addressing its critical situation and clearly, the Commonwealth is eager to show its relevance in Africa as it is actively engaged in the NEPAD programme. Seeds of solidarity must be sown within the whole community of the Commonwealth because that is the only way those bonds could be reinforced and generally, the exchanges that take place between these nations during the Commonwealth Games contribute to ease their goodwill. In this connection, we assume that the Commonwealth of Nations will increasingly adopt a resilient policy that would draw on its multiple resources, allowing it to shine internationally, whatever challenges it may have to face. <sup>16</sup>

### **3.2.2. The UK's Responsibility towards the Commonwealth of Nations**

Once again, it should be considered that the Commonwealth of Nations was officially created following the Statute of Westminster that was signed in London, in 1931. Henceforth, Britain proved its engagement towards its dominions as she allowed them to adopt independent parliaments. We do not doubt about the possibility that the dominions were granted independence in all their internal affairs, yet the British Queen, her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II was named as the Head of this international entity and thus, the United Kingdom was experiencing a new military transition because its empire was declining across the globe. Many events took place in our modern history and the Commonwealth has frequently proven its relevance by helping itself as well as other countries that were not necessarily interested in joining the latter. It is certain that some countries such as Ireland, South Africa and Pakistan decided to leave the Commonwealth but it did not mean that this organization was going to disappear.

Instead of preventing the United Kingdom from developing the international entity it once created, those unfortunate actions rather strengthened this country and encouraged it to grow

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<sup>16</sup>R., Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth, and Modern Britain*, Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames, 2003, pp. 70-73.

solid ties with other permanent members, over the years. Moreover, we hardly imagine the Commonwealth of Nations without the United Kingdom inside for its history will be eternally linked to that of the creation and the growth of the Commonwealth. In fact, it is a quite original situation and we have to recall that after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), some countries that were not colonized by the British decided to join the organization in question. This sheds even more light on the importance of the United Kingdom as a major member of this group of nations as its flag and its culture were and still are appealing to many countries all over the world.

By creating the British Commonwealth of Nations and then omitting the word “British”, the United Kingdom overtly incited its former colonies and its potential partners to enjoy freedom and cooperation in a perfectly peaceful environment and consequently, Britain has successfully managed to reconcile with its colonies and former enemies and thus, with her imperial history. This country shares an authentic relationship with all the members of the Commonwealth and it is noteworthy that the Commonwealth of Nations as a wealth manager and distributor is of significant importance to the United Kingdom because Britain’s relationship with these nations grew even stronger as the Commonwealth citizens who live in the United Kingdom enjoy the right to take part into elections regarding the internal policy of this country; Such an action really highlights the true commitment of the United Kingdom to the Commonwealth of Nations.

Contrarily to some speculations, the United Kingdom has had a huge financial impact on this group of nations because a colossal part of its aid budget is exclusively dedicated to the Commonwealth countries, especially the smaller states that remain quite dependent financially, for the time being. It is evidently important to note that with a financial aid that reaches billions of Pounds, the United Kingdom imposes its role as the biggest contributor to the Commonwealth. As its Secretariat is located in London, the United Kingdom insists on regularly organizing the CHOGM. Now more than ever, the Commonwealth can be compared to a thriving company which promises to grow even further in the coming years and that would be successfully done thanks to the relentless diplomatic efforts of the United Kingdom. In addition, the British population is becoming older and the Commonwealth with all its countries combined represents a youthful population of whom 60 per cent are under 30 years old.

So from Canada's Glaciers to the tropical beaches of the Pacific, the United Kingdom takes the evolution of its former empire quite seriously and despite the geographic distance, the British may even be closer to their Commonwealth partners, compared to their European neighbors. Inside the Commonwealth of Nations, trade is of paramount importance because we have to consider that commercial exchanges occurring between member countries are on average 19 per cent cheaper and this is partly due to linguistic similarities and to the common legal systems that are established in these countries. Given the fact that the Commonwealth of Nations is becoming increasingly stronger internationally and that the United Kingdom is a famous trading nation which has commerce networks all over the planet, the British have always bet on the vibrant economic potential of the Commonwealth, in order to make it even more powerful on an international scale.

Since the creation of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom contributes to make other Commonwealth members' voice heard and hitherto, the British firmly believe that their interests would be best served by engaging further to this group of nations and to create new opportunities for all its citizens. It could be argued that the Commonwealth of Nations proved its unshakeable solidarity during the Second World War (1939-1945) when many compound countries brought their troops and munitions in order to combat and eventually defeat Nazi Germany and it is quite natural that the United Kingdom wants to help those countries back, even if no military intervention is needed nowadays. We also need to consider that the Commonwealth would not manage to co-exist with other international organizations without the necessary help of the United Kingdom.

Some are wont to assert that the presence of the British Queen in its Commonwealth Realms is purely symbolic and that this is just another excuse to organize the Royal family's holidays, far from the gloomy sky of the United Kingdom. However, the presence of the Royal family in each of the Commonwealth countries is intrinsic as its members are pleasantly welcomed by local populations who are deeply attached to the British legacy in their respective countries. Part from the symbolic image these visits tend to reflect, many crucial decisions are debated and thereafter made by the United Kingdom and the visited country. As the Royal family is detached from the British Parliamentary activities, these visits also allow it to remain devoted to defending the British colors across many foreign countries and incontrovertibly, we have to know that the British Queen is faithfully supported by the Royal Family in her various international and local duties.

Britain also means to show all the work she has been doing during so many years in terms of charitable services and the free member states of the Commonwealth are the ideal background for such appreciable actions. Moreover, her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is an emblematic figure who serves as a major example of sobriety, stability and unity. On a cultural level, the British did not want to create a stereotyped association of free member states that would have a unique vision, so instead, the United Kingdom really did its best to gather as many diverse members as possible and to lead them all towards the same goals of freedom and equality and the United Kingdom also needs to constantly prove its neutrality, regarding the political choices which are made within the Commonwealth Secretariat. As far as the Queen Elizabeth II is concerned, her children, grandchildren and their spouses as well as other close members of the Royal family are conscious about the crucial role their isle country must play in the coming years, in order to guarantee the lasting quality of the huge project their eldest had decided to undertake.<sup>17</sup>

In point of fact, the Queen takes the Commonwealth matters so seriously that she makes sure members of the Royal Family are present whenever she has other obligations in the United Kingdom and usually, during Commonwealth ceremonies, Charles, The Prince of Wales along with The Princess Royal voluntarily honors members of the attending public. Through the Royal Family, the United Kingdom expresses its will to welcome guests coming from across the Commonwealth when State banquets or official receptions take place in London. The Commonwealth as a solid group of nations is of course represented by The Royal Family in other countries during commemorations, state funerals or other official meetings including foreign cooperation and through the promotion of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom also has the opportunity to develop its international trade network.

The United Kingdom and the Commonwealth respectively strengthen each other and the number of official engagements that are annually carried out by the Royal Family in the United Kingdom and in the overseas partners is over 1900. In terms of military capacity, since the army is the backbone of internal protection, The Royal Family also shows its unwavering patronage and full support for the Armed Services that protect the United Kingdom as well as those whose role is to secure the other Commonwealth countries, including the Queen's Realms.

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<sup>17</sup> G., Mansell, "The Voice of Britain in the Commonwealth", *The Round Table*, No. 269, January 1978, pp. 48-54.

### **3.3. The Commonwealth of Nation's Prospects**

As we have debated earlier, the states of the Commonwealth of Nations have constantly progressed collectively, as no member country seemed to forget about its other partners and these countries were fated to belong to the same trans-national institution. Therefore, this interwoven organization has to make colossal efforts in order to remain relevant in the near future and regarding its future prospects, the Commonwealth wants to remain faithful to its original approach in the sense that it aims at growing even further internationally because in the next decades, we may predict that the countries that would add to the already long list of member states will not necessarily have political or historical ties with the United Kingdom. We also tend to think that the Commonwealth Secretariat which is now in London might be established elsewhere momentarily before being moved to other Commonwealth countries so as to promote a rather more coherent relationship between all free member states.

Our modern world is evolving in various aspects and so does the Commonwealth. This is at least felt by the compound countries themselves because the goal is to promote a growing pride for the Commonwealth citizens who would supposedly feel luckier than others. Indeed, this organization is steadily establishing its own vision of our modern world and the latter constantly needs to elaborate new and smart approaches because of any unpredicted event. It is now believed that subsequently, the Commonwealth will belong to a younger generation who contrarily to the current one will take more independent initiatives to create and manage decisive economic and political projects that would essentially benefit the Commonwealth community. We have discussed the basic aspirations and principles of the Commonwealth above but we additionally need to find out about the future plans of such an institution and albeit the presence of seemingly recurrent deficiencies and the lack of communication between some of its free member states, this organization plans to bring some key changes meaning to optimize its organization even further.

In the future, the Commonwealth will probably need to have friendly countries that would adopt a similar policy because that would undoubtedly strengthen its position worldwide as a model of success. In this regard, we may consider the touristic assets that many of the Commonwealth countries enjoy, so for example, New Zealand could invest even more money on its Fiordland and make it even more famous so as to attract more foreign visitors and besides, the Victoria Falls in Zambia are hauntingly beautiful and need to be taken care of.



One other attractive location is the Solomon Islands which consist of six major islands that one absolutely needs to discover. In this regard, we have the Namib Desert in Namibia which is apparently the oldest desert on planet earth and possibly one of the driest places one could ever visit.

There are still many other vivid examples showing the natural richness of these unique countries and this has to be taken into account for the next generations because that represents a truly amazing windfall to be directly exploited by the Commonwealth. However, the current Commonwealth has to get rid of division symptoms so that to exploit such assets better. Moreover, to reach a higher democratic status, this international association, it will have to invest more on adequate solutions for peace and unity. It is a well known fact that this group of nations encompasses different members with divergent opinions. As a matter of fact, occasional misunderstandings and conflicts may occur regularly. In the years ahead, the Commonwealth will admittedly need to assess the quality of its interventions worldwide through its Commonwealth Bank,<sup>18</sup> in order to become increasingly accessible to its customers and it will have to show a genuine willingness for providing a larger base for its growing customers.

Originality and creativity in each sector will certainly help the Commonwealth of Nations to dominate most world markets, as each country would bring its local contribution. Moreover, in order to find a suitable middle ground, the Commonwealth Bank will need to offer its customers a wider variety of financial services including several useful products; these products will have to be more efficient and better attuned because the global aim will be to meet the financial needs of each Commonwealth citizen. As we may guess, nowadays, smaller countries view the Commonwealth as a major means to have a privileged relationship with the United Kingdom as well as with other major member countries like: Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, the regular Commonwealth meetings allow them to rub shoulders with such great nations and receive lots of precious information which is decisive for their economic and social developments.

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<sup>18</sup> The Commonwealth Bank provides a variety of financial services including retail, business and institutional banking, funds management, superannuation, insurance, investment and broking services. Accessed from: <http://www.mbaskool.com/marketing-mix/services/16778-commonwealth-bank.html> on April the 15th 2017, at 14:42.



As a trans-continental institution, the Commonwealth will need to find further arrangements in order to enhance the equity of chances for north/south, developed/under developed member countries and to get rid of the qualms that may be felt by some of them for no strings should be attached between the United Kingdom and its former subjects.

It is a fact; the further developments of the Commonwealth of Nations will be directly linked to the decisions that are currently made by all its members and on a more practical level, the Commonwealth hopes to multiply its official meetings and other key events, primarily to foster the sense of camaraderie between its old and potentially newer members and since its geographical coverage will probably increase in the years to come, the Commonwealth will surely encourage its inner economic proximity and that will naturally increase the freedom of movement for capital and citizens, goods and other crucial services. <sup>19</sup>

As other major challenges will occur, the Commonwealth will no longer have to rely on a policy of intent but rather take solid actions on various important fronts. It will be necessary to include the Royal family more often so that the whole world becomes fully conscious about its international role in politics. On the other hand, we are trying to understand the futuristic outcomes of the Commonwealth, so it is primordial to note that most of the countries that diplomatically chose to join in did it because they viewed their membership as a major opportunity. This membership will allow them to seriously focus on their future and ignore about their colonial past, at least for those which used to be under British military control. Furthermore, new values and principles may be added to the Commonwealth Charter in the next decades for more persuasion.

We also know that the Commonwealth enjoys a fruitful history but it needs to perpetuate this success in the future and in order to sustain that, the Commonwealth Secretariat must become more flexible, so in other words, the Commonwealth will have to invent new means that would allow it to regroup its members permanently. Although this may seem to be utopian, there should no longer be the southern and northern Commonwealth. It would evidently be complicated to do such a unifying prowess, yet if this organisation manages to strictly update its main guidelines and clauses, its present and potential member states will know in advance the role they will need to play within this group of nations. By the past, the Commonwealth was viewed as a multi-speed organisation that showed a somehow biased

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<sup>19</sup> R. J. Moore, *Making the new commonwealth*, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 138.

attitude. Hence, within the next five or seven years, the Commonwealth members will have to seek for bilateral meetings instead of being content with the historical denominator they have in common.

A new spirit of unionism has to rise within the Commonwealth of Nations, especially if its compound members grow in number, or then, the outlook of these will only become more and more different, if not utterly contradictory. Here is another fact; the Commonwealth will be determined to learn from its past mistakes as it can be predicted that its next membership criteria will become even more stringent than it has already been. The bar could naturally be set too high for some countries and indeed, that would shed even more light on the countries which are eager to join the latter group or to remain in it, if they are already members of the latter. Thus, including each member country within the group's politics and encouraging them to share their experience should offer a new and positive dynamic for the Commonwealth and this will surely lead towards a stronger Commonwealth of Nations with broad minded societies that would optimistically look for preserving good governance in their respective countries.

As a consequence, the Commonwealth will not necessarily have to change its codes and practices but it will simply need to redefine its primary nature, yet this does not mean that the United Kingdom will have to mention new rules or conditions but it rather means that each participant (including the United Kingdom) will have to overtly reveal its aims and priorities and to discuss them with serenity in front of other Commonwealth members, instead of waiting for constant assistance. Such a method will sweep away any confusion among these partners. Still regarding the future, the Commonwealth should combat any irrelevance, as far as its role is concerned and we have to add that these piecemeal developments will certainly take time but we may feel confident about such future ideals because the Commonwealth proved to be a constant and reliable association throughout the last decades.

We may as well guess that the Commonwealth Secretariat will show an increasing concern or interest about its numerous citizens, compared to its diplomats. Thus, the Commonwealth will be supposedly based on the future and its members will all have to forget, at least partially about the past. Part from having a positive thought about gender equality, we have to recall that poverty threshold is an absolute emergency for the Commonwealth today but this group of nations will inevitably have to work out this issue as fast as possible, since it is one major problem that may lead to other difficulties inside the Commonwealth. In truth,

progressive misery would lead to more inequalities, proving detrimental to the smaller states. As an international institution, the Commonwealth knows that building a pathway against poverty will require draconian efforts in the years to come for economic self-sufficiency seems far from reach for many of its southern members.

As we have argued above, these countries do not need to be everlastingly assisted by richer countries. Nonetheless, they need to have more economic opportunities because they lack factories, workshops and other industrial assets and richer counties will not have to be philanthropy prophets but will rather need to have a common sense of responsibility and protectiveness towards the remaining states which are part of the organisation they thrive to improve. So in theory, by the next decades, the Commonwealth will do its utmost so as to overpass this huge burden. All Commonwealth governments should be required to protect families via childcare programmes because generally poverty is caused by divorces and violence against single mothers. Other forecasts are linked with the help the Commonwealth will have to provide for low income families, meaning to improve their lives and hence, to optimise their chances for social success.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the Commonwealth is clearly a multifaceted club of free nations that seeks for enhancing familial stability for its citizens, knowing that education leads to bigger horizons in the future. Part from a smart financial management, well-being is and will always be a key factor for success among Commonwealth countries and we may also think that employment opportunities may be dealt with differently, in the years to come. Still, in the future, the Commonwealth may very well be compared to a coach providing all the necessary resources to help its citizens, regardless their financial situation, to resist permanently against poverty.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.3.1. The Commonwealth Youth Programme**

The Commonwealth of Nations never ceased innovating and its eager creativity led to the creation of several sub organisations that work directly with its Secretariat. We have to consider that one of its main branches, the CYP had been established in 1974, i.e., three years after the Singapore CHOGM which took place in 1971. From that year onwards, this free

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<sup>20</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/future-commonwealth>. Retrieved on November the 27<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 13:29.

intergovernmental organisation gave an overarching importance to its diverse youth communities and the primary goal of such a segment is above all to promote this youth's participation in the various activities that are carried by its numerous members all over the world. This is a focal point in the Commonwealth's international policy as this group of nations solely means to empower its whole population, regardless of their age, gender or nationality.

This revolutionary philosophy is not only based on a rich education but also on creating as many employment opportunities as possible across all the free member states. The Commonwealth of Nations voluntarily focused on its youth in order to prevent the potential isolation of the smaller countries that are part of the Commonwealth and thanks to the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the pacifist values and principles that we know about are not only taught to younger people but are rather embraced and practiced by them and this further guarantees their durability among Commonwealth citizens. The other crucial factor we need to mention is that the Commonwealth Youth Programme insures the adoption of social justice while generating a relevant prosperity for all Commonwealth countries. Through such a programme, the Commonwealth vividly invites young people coming from different Commonwealth members to express and share their concerns, wishes and life experiences within the latter association.

The young generations are effectively viewed as the key link that will allow the Commonwealth of Nations to manage other volunteer and creative projects meaning to inculcate an early "initiative taking" spirit among the next generations. These young individuals are supposed to become the future Commonwealth's representatives; they could potentially have different political views but that does not necessarily mean that those divergences would bring further constraints as our main guess is that younger generations would lead towards a broader version for the Commonwealth. The latter programme is to build more self confidence among the younger part of the Commonwealth of Nations and their activities are not restricted to politics because health is also of a great importance for the Commonwealth and as a result, the Commonwealth Youth Health Network carries modern polls and studies in order to frame medical needs within the Commonwealth countries.

Taking into consideration the fact that 60 per cent of the Commonwealth population is under 30 years old, the health sector constitutes another great priority for this organisation because a young and healthy population can better contribute to develop prosperity

perspectives for the sake of a stronger Commonwealth and it is a well known fact that heavy health treatments have a colossal financial impact on a country's economy and since the Commonwealth encompasses a wide community, this means that economic losses would become a growing burden on rich and poor members. In addition, the Commonwealth seeks for a growing productivity and even if it may seem too simplistic; health is a key issue that requires a lot of financial investments and we have to understand that it goes hand in hand with the Commonwealth's principles which naturally include offering better social conditions to its citizens.

The Commonwealth of Nations invests cleverly enough to involve its younger peoples to strengthen its Secretariat and to continuously develop new policies so as to sustain well being for the Commonwealth citizens and to frequently invite the youth to take serious action in order to defend the values that their organisation stands for. This decisive youth network proudly reaches out to other partners; these may be official intergovernmental organisations or independent youth associations to suggest and develop more youth enterprises. It is understandable that the Commonwealth favours its youth for it means to offer them micro-credit programmes, entrepreneurial trainings and other management support aiming at empowering young citizens to use their full potential and to create micro enterprises and these could contribute to absorb joblessness in many Commonwealth countries.

Self employment is thus one of this group's major objectives because business expectancies tend to evolve along the years and each person may have their own vision regarding their professional future. The Commonwealth Youth Programme targets big scale livelihood programmes and to put it differently, this enables younger citizens to envisage and realise alternative projects according to their or to other young people's needs. This indirectly teaches these young men and women to elaborate their own educational, economic and social agendas in accordance with the Commonwealth Secretariat's budgets and the Commonwealth of Nations is quite conscious that this freedom of action will positively lead to educate a non reluctant youth who will relentlessly plan and enhance its own life conditions in perfect independence and solidarity.

We need to mention that the Commonwealth Youth Programme offers a yearly award of 35,000 British pounds so as to motivate and inspire an increasing number of young Commonwealth citizens and to incite them to take part in decisions-making.<sup>21</sup> Thanks to such a "coaching", the Commonwealth manages giving birth to many youth-led educational or

professional projects and it seems that this method has already proved to be quite constructive for its youth because each year, more than 100 applications are registered in the Commonwealth Secretariat. This youth programme clearly indicates that the Commonwealth of Nations tried and still is trying to professionalise its youth and to give them a wide choice of social opportunities for it is never too early to learn the adequate competencies and standards that will help these young individuals to acquire the aptness to discuss and do politics.

Regarding the future role of these young men and women, many will become important members within the latter programme and they will later have the possibility to elect other pan-Commonwealth partners who would seek for having the same successful results. In fact, this method is promised to meet a positive response among next Commonwealth generations as within the next few 15 years or so, these youth missions would have already had a huge impact on the life quality of the Commonwealth's youth. We are tempted to add that the Commonwealth Youth Programme is the living testimony that shows the contribution of the Commonwealth towards its own since the help and the training which is provided to this youth will bring other appreciable results in the near future and that would only reinforce the relevance of the Commonwealth of Nations.

In addition, the Commonwealth considers that young people have the right to freely make choices in life and that the decisions they make imply responsibility regarding the results that they may obtain in the sense that they learn to take control of their lives without relying on other individuals and this cornerstone helps them to sustain a solid social base as well as an indefectible political will for improving any given flaws that would be reported by others. Through such a line of thought, the Commonwealth encourages its politicised youth to bring the valuable ingredients that will be necessary for it to live in a stable atmosphere because it is clearly up to this young population to adopt positivity and foresightedness so as to meet a long lasting success and the Commonwealth also insists on the fact that this programme does not mean offering free assistantship to non-committed participants.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/cyhn/>. Accessed on December the 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016, at 09:44.

Otherwise, we think that the Commonwealth of Nations would lose its momentum in the years to come. This intergovernmental organisation will heavily rely on its youth because the more active it is, the more prosperous the Commonwealth becomes. We also have to recall that the Commonwealth's population remains incredibly young. So, in such an intricate context, the elders who witnessed the evolution of this free association should probably accept to "pass the torch" to the next generations, although visions may totally differ. The Commonwealth of Nations will certainly benefit from the progressive outcomes of its youth empowerment if it manages to create similar programmes more often.

### **3.3.2. Between Evolution and Decline**

Throughout the years, many speculations have been made on the relevance and the durability of the Commonwealth of Nations. It is indeed a much debated topic among politicians and other specialists. This international association plays the role of pure advocacy among its own members. Other countries where democracy may not be applied enough are also helped technically and sometimes even financially when it is necessary. The Commonwealth is somehow a colossal enterprise that uses advisory services to improve policy development in as many countries as possible. Its unique policy encourages its free member states to have trust in its practical instructions. Now, it is clear that its members do not have to bear the brunt of any lobbying group, in the sense that they are free to propose political and economic initiatives.

The Commonwealth of Nations adamantly urges its members to make day by day surveys on their citizens in order to find out about their individual resentment on life within the Commonwealth of Nations, meaning to combat the resentment of slavery and colonialism that may still simmer in some small member countries. They may sometimes be required to abide a non-binding plebiscite from such or such international organisation but they remain utterly free regarding their own choices and their desire to aspire for different ideals. A world without the presence of the Commonwealth could be hardly envisaged and even if we cannot ascertain that such an organisation will be able to survive in the coming centuries, we have to precise that this question will remain directly linked to the British Monarchy. In other words, many subjects of the Queen, i.e. realms are actually quite proud of their inherited British history, values and life style.

At least, this currently incites us to think that the popularity of the British Queen will hugely contribute into the prevailing of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, regarding the survival of



this group of nations, we have to consider the fact that the 54 free member states were officially born out of the ashes of the British Empire that was rapidly declining after the Second World War (1939-1945). This used to be the greatest colonial power in world history but it could not sustain its existence any longer, whence many may wonder about the chances the Commonwealth will have as far as its future evolution is concerned. However, given the wide spread of the English language, we are tempted to argue that this would strengthen its members' bonds and that many exchanges on various fields will be made much easier. Of course, the Commonwealth will continuously have to avoid trivial squabbles from occurring between its divergent members and indeed, there should be no more divergence inside this organisation.

Moreover, we now ignore about the successions that will take place among the British Royal Family and we assume that this will be a point of paramount consequences on the Commonwealth because apparently, this pacifist group of nations is of great importance for the British Monarchy of our time. We also suppose that any change at the Royal level would be felt in the other Commonwealth countries and that could either lead to a British free Commonwealth of Nations or to its mere dissolution. It could also lead to a more conservative Commonwealth that would be heavily influenced by the British, after all. Here, we are focusing on the Royal family because in case Queen Elizabeth II bids farewell to this world, most of its realms will accordingly end their British-based monarchical systems, although the Queen's symbolic figure is irreplaceable for countries like: Jamaica, Canada, Australia, Barbados, New Zealand and some other faithful realms. <sup>22</sup>

Likewise, if the citizens of most realms start to claim for a republic, the rules may change for the Commonwealth of Nations and retrospectively, it is interesting to connect the foundation of the Commonwealth with its future evolution because it all started with the will of the British Monarchy to show its peaceful presence on its overseas territories. The British Royal family veritably operates at the forefront of Commonwealth affairs and this means that their decisions contribute to create new events or even to cancel them. The Commonwealth of Nations has been presented with a positive ring to interested countries and despite the acrimony that was felt in many of them, the idea of belonging to a popular group of nations

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<sup>22</sup> Lord Casey, *The Future Of The Commonwealth*, Frederick Muller, London, 1964, p. 78.



that seeks for providing help for each of its members will seemingly always appeal to needy countries as well as to developed ones.

Unity has recurrently proven to be a key savour for many nations and the spirit of gathering different ethnicities with their various customs will probably prevail within this international entity as it will constitute its basic force. The future of the Commonwealth of Nations may seem somehow fuzzy to us because history is unpredictable and military conflicts may outbreak at any moment between struggling countries and the fear is that the Commonwealth may be involuntarily included in a given war. So we can only assume that the continuation of the Commonwealth of Nations will be tightly linked to the survival of each of its members. Further, it could also be inferred that globally, the development of the Commonwealth is still in progress as many issues like, violence, dictatorship and poverty remain to be sorted out in many of its members. It will be a matter of time before we can find out whether this international organisation manages to overcome other incidental challenges because its colossal projects will require lots of time and energy before they eventually see the light of the day.

Besides, there have been constitutional crises in several British Realms and in such countries, the Viceroy plays an important role but as far as political processes are concerned, tensions occasionally rise between the latter and the British Monarchy. Regarding the future evolution of the Commonwealth, the problem also arises in the complexity of its agenda because evidently, the Commonwealth remains an action oriented organisation and it can be counted among the group of nations which privilege welfare for their citizens as it gives a real priority to their life quality and to the blossoming of their professional careers. As we have insisted earlier, the Commonwealth story is central to the British one and consequently, the British will inevitably make pressure on all Commonwealth countries to develop further the Commonwealth Games.

In the future, the Commonwealth Games will surely have a huge impact on this institution's youth as a new generation of Commonwealth champions will probably rise to increase the sentiment of pride among the member countries. We perfectly know that sport helps people transcend diversity barriers and celebrate various games together in a favourably peaceful atmosphere. Again, we have to mention that the British invented and proudly defended several games like soccer, badminton, water polo and many other popular disciplines. Moreover, we predict that this nation will endeavour to transmit sport, respect and self-control

values to the Commonwealth next generations and it is all at its credit. Regarding its next evolution, the Commonwealth will necessarily have to bet on sport, in addition to culture so as to encourage an even closer inter-Commonwealth relationship for its members. In effect, this group of nations will have to duly create and manage new cultural events so that it remains considered as a world reference on that particular field and also to attract the best professors and instructors the world has to offer.

Thus, if the Commonwealth manages to combat exasperation and confusion among its existing and new members, this will allow it to prove its durability over the coming years, regardless the complications it will have to face later on. Hence, the sudden demise of arguably the world's greatest empire contributed to the birth of the Commonwealth of Nations and this means that the British seriously rely on this political entity to carry on their expansionism goals, although this does not include colonialism any more. Likewise, given the fact that the Commonwealth decisions brought the end of apartheid in South Africa and white rule in Zimbabwe, we assume that these countries will be eternally grateful to this organisation and at first sight, it may seem that this group of Nations is sleep-walking towards irrelevance but in reality, the Commonwealth enjoys many assets that could make it become one of the world's greatest trade and political networks in the years to come.<sup>23</sup>

It will certainly have to establish many new reforms and rules while adopting an even more radical stand on human rights, without fudging its attitude and that would indeed save the Commonwealth from a potential decline because when avoiding inertia and complacency, its relevance will become even more obvious to the other nations and regarding other problems or flaws, the Commonwealth will have the obligation to keep 'fighting on the battlefield', until reliable solutions are found and agreed upon by all the free member states. In addition, contrarily to other nations that do not apply democracy, the Commonwealth will have to help organisations like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists in order to facilitate further the application of fair justice and the rule of law. In addition, the Commonwealth should promote its pacifist image even more aggressively on different types of mainstream media in order to attract even more attention on its network.

As far as our study is concerned, we are guessing that the Commonwealth will be even more respected by other countries and institutions within the coming years as we think that its free

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<sup>23</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/future-commonwealth>. Accessed on December the 6<sup>th</sup> 2016, at 20:47.

member states will increase in number but only if all its leaders agree to adopt the same social and diplomatic policies. By the past, the Commonwealth of Nations was still building up as its members were not as numerous as they are now and hence, this organisation has had the necessary time to figure out the policy that may suit it the most, so regarding this particular aspect, we may assume that in the next decades, the Commonwealth will despite itself remain quite dependant on the United Kingdom economically. In effect, the modern Commonwealth is mostly run by the British as the majority of its other members are still small in terms of trade opportunities and this distinctive factor will undoubtedly strengthen Britain's position within the group of nations it once decided to found.

Besides, that will certainly contribute to fructify financial windfall for the United Kingdom as the former coloniser will have the possibility to benefit from sovereign wealth funds to expand its local projects even further. We may never mention it enough, the Commonwealth of Nations is the ambassador of humanitarian values and openness. As a result, we predict that each necessary step will be soon taken in order to improve exchanges between the United Kingdom and the other members. After all, the Commonwealth is thankful to the United Kingdom for the all the efforts it has made and vice versa. In this respect, it is obvious that the United Kingdom will always have a privileged position within the latter entity. However, we may guess that trade opportunities will be equitably distributed; otherwise many countries would leave this organisation.

If the Commonwealth finally manages to remain truly faithful to its core principles, its main prospects could grow incredibly fast and its future will be as bright as the geographic surface it covers, in the sense that new goals may be achieved all around the globe as it could even influence world politics via encouraging non member states' presidents to meet with their neighbours and discuss their divergences diplomatically in order to peacefully sort out major issues, similarly to the procedure that is adopted by the Commonwealth community. The recommendations of the Commonwealth will also go in accordance with those of the United Nations and such a factor will only demonstrate the Commonwealth's force to other countries and associations and one does not doubt about the contribution of the United Kingdom on that level. Moreover, we do not assume that the Commonwealth will bask in the glory eternally but we remain quite optimistic regarding its betterment in the coming decades.

Finally, if the Commonwealth of Nations wishes to sustain its development projects while justifying its international presence, this group of nations should preserve its members and

avoid squandering its energy in dubious operations. Further, instead of envisaging a uni-polar vision of the world, the Commonwealth will need to urge all its members to adopt a multi-polar policy so as to enclose various activities aiming at creating much more opportunities (whether economic or educational) for the Commonwealth community and the coherence of this international organisation has perhaps been marred by some ethnic conflicts and the difficulty of some citizens to travel to the United Kingdom in order to study or to settle with their family, although they have the right to do so. Transparency will indeed contribute to enrich the Commonwealth's future because next generations will be more inclined to travel through the numerous Commonwealth countries. All things considered, we also assume that The Commonwealth will have to find a sort of panacea for itself and therefore, reconcile its old members with the newer ones and it will have to unshackle with regard to its future political constraints, aiming to guarantee a solid future for its youth.<sup>24</sup>

This last chapter gathers some of the facts that we mentioned earlier and it focuses on the future outcomes of the Commonwealth of Nations because in our study, we intend to show the relevance of this intergovernmental organisation so we are discussing some of the evolutionary aspects of the member countries from 1945 to 1990. In order to fully comprehend this topic, we additionally want to tackle sensitive matters such as the harsh criticisms that were made against the Commonwealth. That part helps us learn more about its future outcomes because it made us retain that the Commonwealth never stopped going further in its free initiatives. The third chapter is also dedicated to the prevailing role of Britain within the Commonwealth of Nations for the latter mentions the Royal family's interventions during key meetings. Throughout this research, we understand that the Commonwealth frequently elaborates new cultural programmes and viable economic solutions to insure a foolproof survival. Indeed, this organisation focuses on its youth and promotes an original celebration of the differences that contribute to strengthen it.

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<sup>24</sup> K., Srinivasan, *The Rise, Decline and Future of the British Commonwealth*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 126-143.

## Conclusion

The problematic in our research is primarily concerned with the real role that has been played by the Commonwealth of Nations to sustain a secure environment that would allow the United Kingdom to resist to war hardships and hence to prosper right after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). Regarding this “problematic role”, we may tend to argue that as a momentous actor leading for peace, the Commonwealth of Nations remains a conspicuous anachronism. But throughout our attempt to study the origins and the evolution of this intergovernmental entity, we would rather assume that it is not really the case. One Hypothesis is that the Commonwealth would have never existed if the United Kingdom did not adopt a flexible policy with its colonies; and if Britain was not that needy during the Second World War (1939-1945), she would have kept control over its dominions.

In other words, it was obvious that the British valued their colossal empire and history would probably have been different for its colonies if its survival had not been seriously compromised because of the Third Reich’s attacks. In preamble, our study reiterates that the Commonwealth of Nations has by far been a quite valuable source of political coalition and cultural pride for Britain and this goes in accordance with its spirit of expansionism. However, we still consider its ideals as being mainly limited to law, human rights, education, and science; we shall not forget to mention the insisting promotion of gender equality all over the world. Moreover, some recent instances do indicate that the Commonwealth of Nations is currently trying to be more active internationally in order to uphold the oft proclaimed role of its members.

We are further convinced that the motivation of the free member states to help the United Kingdom rested upon the fact that they believed in the good willing of the British to form a sort of brotherhood with the countries it used to colonise. The focal point was that the Commonwealth would acquire a wider planetary acknowledgment and that its missions would multiply. Nonetheless, it is obvious now that the Commonwealth’s role as a global peace promoter has changed through the last years. Currently, the main mission of the Commonwealth of Nations consists in facilitating and assisting African children by giving them access to free medication and also to tuition free programmes. Humanitarian aid is among the most important actions the United Kingdom and these free member states can do at this stage, but the Commonwealth of Nations does not want to limit its influence on the

humanitarian level. Although this free political entity faced several withdrawals and resignations by the past, it continued its partnership in order to manage its security and development issues.

If we refer to the Commonwealth's history, these free associated states did their best in order to combat wars, but nowadays, they are creating nongovernmental organisations seeking to teach the new generations about tolerance, respect and understanding other cultures and customs. The Commonwealth of Nations is also against any disturbingly limited perspective as far as human values are concerned, and we need to point out that this international association succeeded in its mission for the main reason that it showed its remarkable solidarity with the British when the latter needed it the most. Regarding the world we are living in today and the conflicts which are currently opposing many countries, we may assume that the Commonwealth still has a promising future worldwide. This international association has effectively been created in order to promote global peace and also to encourage people to contribute in making their environment a better living place.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this international entity possesses unlimited human as well as logistic resources and these help to face potential challenges that could foil its seemingly heartfelt endeavour. Indeed, the Commonwealth wants to be seen as a fully dedicated group of nations which general aim is to protect small and weaker nations and also to “coach” them towards sustaining a totally free governmental system. Our study allows us to understand that human rights and democracy were among the primary targets of the Commonwealth of Nations. Meanwhile, progressing in these three chapters, we notice that this political entity focuses more and more on the application of the rule of law and gender equality because these are two of the main key factors that lead to the latter's aspirations. Unfortunately, these ideals are yet to be adopted by so many countries around the world, as many people still suffer from illiteracy, injustice, domestic violence and even barbarism. This does not mean that the Commonwealth's principles are odd or dubious but as it is mentioned in our introduction, the Commonwealth has been founded progressively, after more than a decade following the end of the First World War (1914-1918). Nowadays, world nations are no more waging great world wars but there still exist multiple diplomatic tensions over some sensitive territories in the Middle East for example. However, international politics change so fast that all the members of the Commonwealth must quickly adapt to such alterations if they really mean to cope with their supposedly peaceful agenda.

Of course, our topic focuses on the polyvalent role that was played by the Commonwealth of Nations in the past and in order to explain our subject further, some illustrative examples are given; the latter show the manner these free member states helped the United Kingdom not to stand on its own against Nazi Germany of 1939. The results of this research are effectively diverse but the main deduction is that the United Kingdom could not have resisted to the troubles it was facing during the Second World War (1939-1945) without the decisive help of its allies and particularly, the one of its dominions that became its free associates after the official creation of the Commonwealth of Nations. Again, this study increases our understanding as to the fact that no other international groupings except the Allies, the Axis powers and the Commonwealth of Nations took part in the above mentioned war, regardless of some of the African fighters who found themselves forced to join either camps. Without such a comforting aid, we believe that the United Kingdom would have hardly been able to resist militarily against Adolf Hitler's army, although this country could still rely on its other allies' inalienable support; and we believe that it would have been occupied by German forces during the Second World War (1939-1945), similarly to France and to its East-European neighbours.

This also makes us conclude that the Commonwealth started to evolve from 1949, i.e. two years after the independence of India. This south Asian country was very important for Britain and it was later divided into two free nations which are Pakistan and India. This evolution became obvious when India expressed its will to remain in the Commonwealth, although it refused to owe allegiance to the British Crown. A few months later, it was decided that sovereign nations had eligibility to join the Commonwealth of Nations with no obligatory allegiance to Great Britain, as far as they considered her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the symbol of the latter organisation.

Our dissertation also helps us consider that this evolution went farther when Mozambique joined the Commonwealth, back in 1995. It was undoubtedly a great political advance since this African country had never been a British colony. We may add that the other conclusion was that the Commonwealth of Nations is no longer a really dominant political group on an international scale; yet, despite the fact that certain countries have left this organisation, the latter is still considered as being a solid international entity as it is still relevant through its various insights and projects. Nevertheless, we infer that ever since the beginning of its activities, this free association needed to co-operate further and we believe

that its exchanges should really be perfectly equitable in order to fully implement the ideals it aspires for, regardless of the clashes of interest that might limit those common goals.

Hitherto, almost all countries taking part in such international projects seemed to agree with the globalist view that the developed countries used to have, but in reality, the seemingly fair Commonwealth realm included some inequalities between the developed and the developing countries. For example, some African countries such as Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia lacked some necessary infrastructures and other developing member states suffered from a threatening social plight that needed to be ameliorated and despite being the spearheading of the Commonwealth of Nations, Great Britain pretended having lots of other priorities elsewhere. Since the world became globalised, the Commonwealth of Nations sought to strengthen its economic co-operations, yet again, these conglomerate efforts would mostly benefit developed countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

On the other hand, this leads us to assume that this so-called globalised world is quite contradictory in terms of economic exchanges because these recent political settings brought out just a few winners when compared to the majority of countries that still encounter intricate economic ordeals. We try to explain the causes of this obvious abyss by arguing about the fact that industrialisation led to this inequality all over the planet. We also notice that even though the United Kingdom inexorably encouraged the establishment of this peaceful union (meaning to sustain an increasing value of help and mutual exchange), real facts only prove that the Commonwealth is still mainly British and that conflict prevention through the spread of democracy is apparently a non-achievable goal.

Thus, the British Crown decided to promote a far more humanised and civilised conscience that the whole world would be supposed to adopt, and evidently, we might consider that the United Kingdom urgently needed to create the Commonwealth of Nations because the British elite wanted to be viewed as being the voluntary bridge-builder between both southern and northern countries. Indeed, the status of Great Britain was gradually seen as being more moderate in terms of international politics as this conquering nation turned into a peaceful mediator whose role would be to spread union, co-operation, common reasoning, democracy, security and development. Moreover, the Commonwealth will have to face other challenges in the near future and what will allow the Commonwealth to survive and become more prosperous would be the fact of generating a stronger feeling of belonging to a truly



unified family. This may seem caricatured but it will really save this group of nations and this convinces us that the British sphere did implement its influence within the latter organisation; the next challenges will force each free member to take independent initiatives to make the Commonwealth's voice heard everywhere. As researchers, we think that unity and positivity remain the backbone of the Commonwealth and that this legitimate network of nations has a promising future.

In addition, we may predict that this intergovernmental organisation will become increasingly voluntary, considering how it contributed to save the United Kingdom and helped it rebuild itself in order to prove the usefulness and the relevance of its actions. Furthermore, the Commonwealth membership offers a great number of advantages to the member countries that are part of it because in case of conflict, other members (big and small) would express their concerns and that would eventually lead to military deployment in case of any war outbreak. However, we understand that this military aspect benefits more the smallest members who may be too weak to defend their borders on their own.

We finally deduce that the Commonwealth enjoys an epic history in the sense that it allows all its citizens to take part in general as well as local elections taking place in the United Kingdom and this clearly proves that these citizens' say is highly welcomed in Britain. In addition, we now know that Commonwealth Citizens are not considered as aliens within this community and that they do not systematically have to be British subjects to move to the United Kingdom or to other Commonwealth destinations. Officially, the Commonwealth of Nations is no more the British Commonwealth but it seems that its numerous citizens remain British subjects. In fact, whenever there is litigation (civil war or any local instability) in another member country, its citizens are only allowed to claim for the British embassy's support, instead of complaining in their respective countries.

Moreover, our dissertation helps us analyse the relationship both the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth share because we notice that a great number of Commonwealth citizens still use British passports when travelling abroad and this proves that each step the Commonwealth takes as a group of partner countries includes the United Kingdom. After careful consideration, we may add that the Commonwealth belongs to its youth because over half its population are under 25 years old. The final conclusion would be that the Commonwealth of Nations proved to be crucial by the past and we assume it will probably

have another chance to reflect its optimistic nature and shine internationally as a strong and peaceful organisation through future events.

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**Appendices :**

I - A map illustrating the military expansion of Great Britain.

II - A picture of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

III - A Picture depicting her Majesty Elizabeth II during her visit to some Commonwealth countries.

IV - An image illustrating the numerous flags of the free member states.

V – A copy of the Commonwealth Charter.

VI - A map highlighting the Commonwealth countries.

VII - A picture of the Commonwealth's official flag.

VIII - Some historical data regarding the Second World War (1939-1945).

IX - Pictures showing Commonwealth troops during the Second World War.







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## **THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTER**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
by Command of Her Majesty

**March 2013**



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## **THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTER**

### **PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS**

1. The Government hereby encloses the full text of the Commonwealth Charter which was agreed by all Commonwealth Heads of Government and officially dated on 14 December 2012.
2. The Government welcomes the adoption of the Commonwealth Charter by all Commonwealth member states and looks forward to the pan-Commonwealth launch of the Charter during Commonwealth Week in March 2013.
3. A strong Commonwealth will help us promote UK objectives of democracy and human rights, good governance and, in turn, the future prosperity of all its members. Over the past two years, the UK has played a leading role in efforts to strengthen and reform the organisation to ensure it remains relevant, fulfils its potential and is effective in the future. Strong, clear values are crucial to the future credibility and success of the organisation.
4. The Government sees the Commonwealth Charter as an important outcome of the modernisation process and a milestone for the Commonwealth. For the first time in its 64 year history, the Commonwealth has a single document setting out the core values of the organisation and the aspirations of its members.
5. We recognise that the Charter is not an exhaustive document. It is an overarching summary which brings together the values and commitments of the Commonwealth that are set out in more detail in previous declarations and affirmations.
6. The Government wants the Charter to become an established, recognisable statement of what the Commonwealth stands for, accessible to all Commonwealth citizens, and a means to protect and promote the Commonwealth's core democratic values for years to come. The commitments in the Charter should be upheld, adhered to and kept under review by member governments, Parliaments and civil society organisations.



## **Charter of the Commonwealth**

We the people of the Commonwealth:

Recognising that in an era of changing economic circumstances and uncertainty, new trade and economic patterns, unprecedented threats to peace and security, and a surge in popular demands for democracy, human rights and broadened economic opportunities, the potential of and need for the Commonwealth – as a compelling force for good and as an effective network for co-operation and for promoting development – has never been greater,

Recalling that the Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent and equal sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of our peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace, and influencing international society to the benefit of all through the pursuit of common principles and values,

Affirming that the special strength of the Commonwealth lies in the combination of our diversity and our shared inheritance in language, culture and the rule of law; and bound together by shared history and tradition; by respect for all states and peoples; by shared values and principles and by concern for the vulnerable,

Affirming that the Commonwealth way is to seek consensus through consultation and the sharing of experience, especially through practical co-operation, and further affirming that the Commonwealth is uniquely placed to serve as a model and as a catalyst for new forms of friendship and co-operation in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the role of the Commonwealth as a recognised intergovernmental champion of small states, advocating for their special needs; providing policy advice on political, economic and social development issues; and delivering technical assistance,

Welcoming the valuable contribution of the network of the many intergovernmental, parliamentary, professional and civil society bodies which support the Commonwealth and which subscribe and adhere to its values and principles,

Affirming the validity of and our commitment to the values and principles of the Commonwealth as defined and strengthened over the years including: the Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment, the Millbrook Action Programme, the Latimer House Principles, the Aberdeen Agenda, the Trinidad and Tobago Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles, the Munyonyo Statement on Respect and Understanding, the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan, the Perth Declaration on Food Security Principles, and the Commonwealth Declaration on Investing in Young People,

Affirming our core Commonwealth principles of consensus and common action, mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness, Reaffirming the core values and principles of the Commonwealth as declared by this Charter:

## **I. DEMOCRACY**

We recognise the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, in particular through free and fair elections in shaping the society in which they live. Governments, political parties and civil society are responsible for upholding and promoting democratic culture and practices and are accountable to the public in this regard. Parliaments and representative local governments and other forms of local governance are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance.

We support the role of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group to address promptly and effectively all instances of serious or persistent violations of Commonwealth values without any fear or favour.

## **II. HUMAN RIGHTS**

We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments. We are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for all without discrimination on any grounds as the foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies. We note that these rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and cannot be implemented selectively.

We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds.

## **III. INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY**

We firmly believe that international peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all. We are committed to an effective multilateral system based on inclusiveness, equity, justice and international law as the best foundation for achieving consensus and progress on major global challenges including piracy and terrorism.

We support international efforts for peace and disarmament at the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. We will contribute to the promotion of international consensus on major global political, economic and social issues. We will be guided by our commitment to the security, development and prosperity of every member state.

We reiterate our absolute condemnation of all acts of terrorism in whatever form or wherever they occur or by whomsoever perpetrated, with the consequent tragic loss of human life and severe damage to political, economic and social stability. We reaffirm our commitment to work together as a diverse community of nations, individually, and collectively under the auspices and authority of the United Nations, to take concerted and resolute action to eradicate terrorism.

#### **IV. TOLERANCE, RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING**

We emphasise the need to promote tolerance, respect, understanding, moderation and religious freedom which are essential to the development of free and democratic societies, and recall that respect for the dignity of all human beings is critical to promoting peace and prosperity.

We accept that diversity and understanding the richness of our multiple identities are fundamental to the Commonwealth's principles and approach.

#### **V. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

We are committed to peaceful, open dialogue and the free flow of information, including through a free and responsible media, and to enhancing democratic traditions and strengthening democratic processes.

#### **VI. SEPARATION OF POWERS**

We recognise the importance of maintaining the integrity of the roles of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. These are the guarantors in their respective spheres of the rule of law, the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and adherence to good governance.

#### **VII. RULE OF LAW**

We believe in the rule of law as an essential protection for the people of the Commonwealth and as an assurance of limited and accountable government. In particular we support an independent, impartial, honest and competent judiciary and recognise that an independent, effective and competent legal system is integral to upholding the rule of law, engendering public confidence and dispensing justice.

#### **VIII. GOOD GOVERNANCE**

We reiterate our commitment to promote good governance through the rule of law, to ensure transparency and accountability and to root out, both at national and international levels, systemic and systematic corruption.

#### **IX. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

We recognise that sustainable development can help to eradicate poverty by pursuing inclusive growth whilst preserving and conserving natural ecosystems and promoting social equity.

We stress the importance of sustainable economic and social transformation to eliminate poverty and meet the basic needs of the vast majority of the people of the

world and reiterate that economic and social progress enhances the sustainability of democracy.

We are committed to removing wide disparities and unequal living standards as guided by internationally agreed development goals. We are also committed to building economic resilience and promoting social equity, and we reiterate the value in technical assistance, capacity building and practical cooperation in promoting development.

We are committed to an effective, equitable, rules-based multilateral trading system, the freest possible flow of multilateral trade on terms fair and equitable to all, while taking into account the special requirements of small states and developing countries.

We also recognise the importance of information and communication technologies as powerful instruments of development; delivering savings, efficiencies and growth in our economies, as well as promoting education, learning and the sharing of culture. We are committed to strengthening its use while enhancing its security, for the purpose of advancing our societies.

## **X. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT**

We recognise the importance of the protection and conservation of our natural ecosystems and affirm that sustainable management of the natural environment is the key to sustained human development. We recognise the importance of multilateral cooperation, sustained commitment and collective action, in particular by addressing the adaptation and mitigation challenges of climate change and facilitating the development, diffusion and deployment of affordable environmentally friendly technologies and renewable energy, and the prevention of illicit dumping of toxic and hazardous waste as well as the prevention and mitigation of erosion and desertification.

## **XI. ACCESS TO HEALTH, EDUCATION, FOOD AND SHELTER**

We recognise the necessity of access to affordable health care, education, clean drinking water, sanitation and housing for all citizens and emphasise the importance of promoting health and well-being in combating communicable and non-communicable diseases.

We recognise the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

## **XII. GENDER EQUALITY**

We recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential components of human development and basic human rights. The advancement of women's rights and the education of girls are critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development.

**XIII. IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

We recognise the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace, democracy and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values, such as tolerance and understanding, including respect for other cultures. The future success of the Commonwealth rests with the continued commitment and contributions of young people in promoting and sustaining the Commonwealth and its values and principles, and we commit to investing in and promoting their development, particularly through the creation of opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship.

**XIV. RECOGNITION OF THE NEEDS OF SMALL STATES**

We are committed to assisting small and developing states in the Commonwealth, including the particular needs of small island developing states, in tackling their particular economic, energy, climate change and security challenges, and in building their resilience for the future.

**XV. RECOGNITION OF THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE STATES**

We are committed to collaborating to find ways to provide immediate help to the poorest and most vulnerable including least developed countries, and to develop responses to protect the people most at risk.

**XVI. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

We recognise the important role that civil society plays in our communities and countries as partners in promoting and supporting Commonwealth values and principles, including the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and in achieving development goals.

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We are committed to ensuring that the Commonwealth is an effective association, responsive to members’ needs, and capable of addressing the significant global challenges of the future.

We aspire to a Commonwealth that is a strong and respected voice in the world, speaking out on major issues; that strengthens and enlarges its networks; that has a global relevance and profile; and that is devoted to improving the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth.

Dated this 14th day of December 2012



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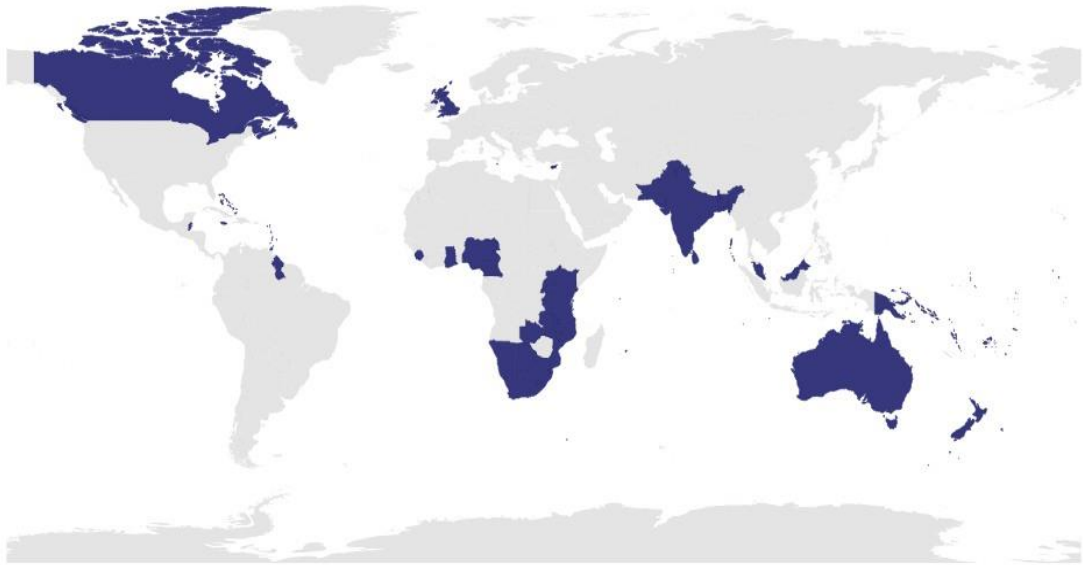
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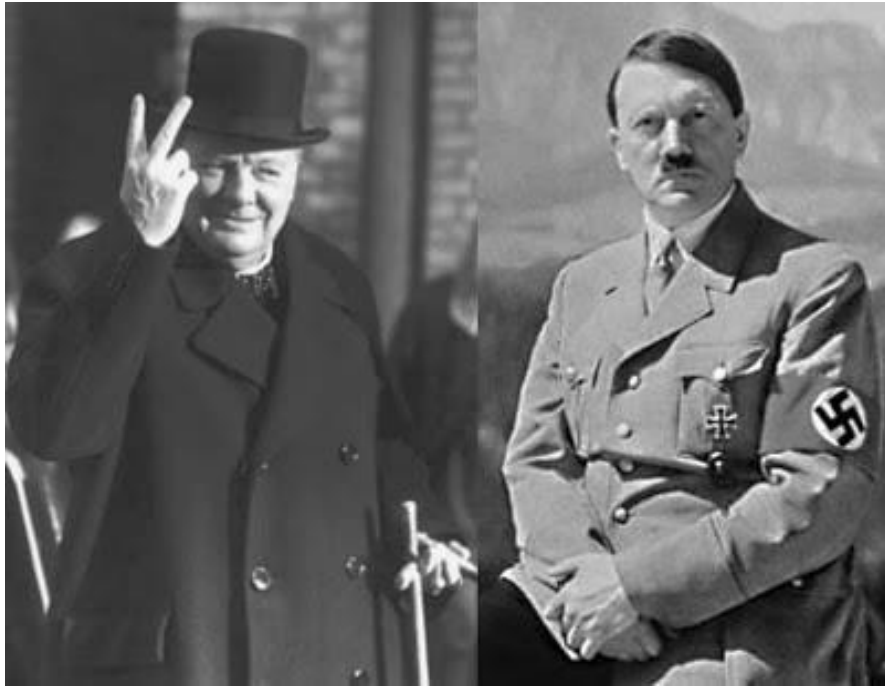
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