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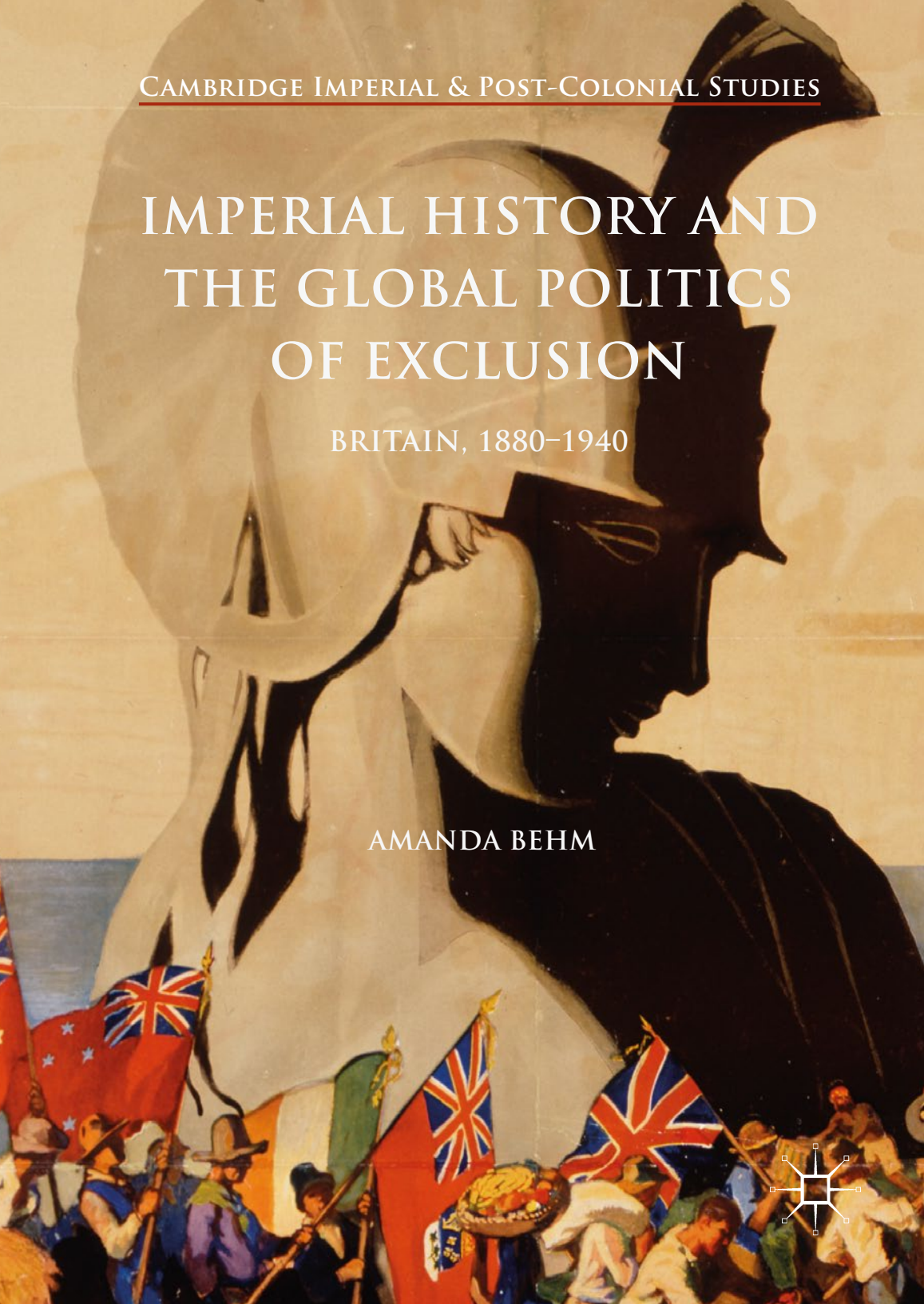
IMPERIAL HISTORY AND THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF EXCLUSION

BRITAIN, 1880–1940

AMANDA BEHM



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Amanda Behm

Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion

Britain, 1880–1940

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Amanda Behm
Department of History
University of York
York, UK

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: British Imperial History and Its Antecedents

In or around 1912, the British Empire overtook history. Rising demands for representation and rights in the 'subject empire' clashed with Dominion assertions of primacy in matters of immigration and defense. Anti-Asian and anti-black discrimination in settler societies belied talk of unity and the equality of subjects. The Empire could not hold. Or so feared Lionel Curtis and Sidney Low as they watched the British state's halting response to the ferment, and as each contemplated a wholesale reworking of historical and strategic studies to avert deeper crisis. In his feverish research for the Oxford Round Table's first policy manifesto, the recently returned Milnerite Curtis thought he had stumbled across the roots of contemporary struggles in 'the main essential outlines of world history': the East-West impasse into which the Empire had fatefully stumbled, with Anglo-Saxondom alone positioned to mediate between 'primitive society' and the 'top rung of civilization'. 'England has thus undertaken a vast two-fold mission', Curtis exhorted colleagues, 'in which the task of regulating the inevitable effect of European on Asiatic civilisation is not the smallest part'.[1] The well-connected London journalist and author Low, meanwhile, pleaded that same year before the British Academy for the introduction of a holistic 'Imperial Studies' at empire's nerve center that would finally address the breadth and diversity of British realms. Neither scholars nor the public, Low argued, could afford any longer to 'omit from [their] consideration of the dynamics of Empire the processes by which Englishmen have become responsible for the government of a quarter or a fifth of the population of this planet'.[2]

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The Edwardian era thus drew to its close on a daunting realization: the British Empire was a vast, polyglot, multiethnic entity riddled with conflict and inequality. It may seem incredible now that this fact could have escaped serious minds in the early twentieth century, or that those minds could have 'omitted' from the ambit of imperial theory and policy the Raj, the occupation of Egypt, African annexations, or the beleaguered Caribbean. But as this book will explain, a much different conception of empire prevailed at the zenith of British world power from that presumed by subsequent generations looking backward. In the early twentieth century, mainstream British political, journalistic, and scholarly opinion, with networks radiating across the world, held that there was not one empire under British sway but two or more. There was the self-governing settler colonial world. Then there was another space, separate and further divisible, populated by varieties of 'alien' or naturally dependent subjects. It was this fragmented model of empire that Curtis and Low's campaigns sought to revise. Gravely concerned by the struggle between Dominions, 'dependencies', and center, and by the very means through which imperial policy was taught and advocated from the universities to Fleet Street to Whitehall, Curtis and Low took it upon themselves in 1912 to recast the study of Britain's empires within a single, comprehensive frame—to make multiple histories one.

While later chapters will return to Curtis and Low's initiatives at length, their twin epiphanies introduce here the fundamental questions with which this book grapples. Why and how had a divided model of empire achieved prominence in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain? And why did proponents and critics of this model, alike, fight their battles though the practice and invocation of history? This book finds that British scholars and planners, confronting the British Empire as a contested and unstable global polity from the mid-Victorian era onward, engaged in strategic intellectual sorting that both drew on and informed emergent structures of knowledge. The newly professional and 'scientific' pursuit of history, as it arose in and after the 1870s, provided novel and potent ways of defining difference and belonging.[3] This dynamic emerged with striking clarity around the subfield of imperial history—'colonial' history, as it was called by early practitioners—as it coalesced as a formal adjunct to modern history from the 1880s onward. Imperial history became a coherent albeit porous arena in which politicians, journalists, and intellectuals, in Britain and beyond, advocated for their vision of the Britannic future. As such, it serves as this book's entry toward understanding the worldviews and political repertoires of three

generations of Britons whose efforts to guide nation and empire toward their best possible ends nonetheless transmitted a precarious inheritance to the decolonizing and postcolonial world.

Imperial history took shape to champion one perceived category of empire over another—the empire of white settlement over the empire of dependent rule. Its participants' collective aspiration, pursued through new institutions, narratives, and benchmarks, was to build a platform for settler-imperial consolidation. Their preliminary maneuver was to exclude India and dependencies from proper study. Their enduring legacy was to set questions of justice adrift in a new vastness of time. And so the trajectory of imperial history, set in wider context, reveals that rather than being a straightforward product of biological claims or basic visual ideology, racial exclusion in the late British Empire came to assume an important historical dimension.[4] Ideals such as constitutionalism, self-government by yardstick, and the notion of an essentially Britannic political inheritance gained their twentieth-century forms as metropolitan thinkers recognized and in turn fled from the messy and urgent realities of authoritarianism and inequality in the wider British world. For how, truly, could Britain embrace liberty, self-government, and progress while ruling over a vast, authoritarian empire? How could the metropolitan architects of imperial relations profess equality of subjecthood while unmistakably operating on the presumption of difference? While these dilemmas have informed many recent explorations of modern British and imperial history, scholars have tended to respond by deducing self-interest, contradiction, tension, or 'blind-spots'.[5] This book seeks instead to understand how 'contradictions' could be anything but contradictory in their time, as historical actors rationalized 'inconsistencies, failures, and unintended consequences' and incorporated them into lasting frameworks for knowledge.[6]

In a moment of profound anxiety about the nature of Britain's overseas presence and domestic fitness, historians and policy minds rejigged the temporal underpinnings of imperial politics, allocating different pasts and futures to the empire's diverse and increasingly interconnected populations. Taking cues from scholars who have observed that, far from being a 'neutral medium', historical time—the relation between past, present, and future—is 'inherently ethical and political' and constantly negotiated, this book locates the processes that made those specific moves possible and meaningful.[7] While histories of empire have always been with Britain, they did not bear equal authority and political coherence across generations.[8] History emerged as a formal academic pursuit only in the 1860s, becoming

a newly prominent medium for structuring belief systems and claiming and contesting moral authority.[9] As for imperial history, scholars have largely missed the import of its arrival in the 1880s. Some describe it simply as by-product of 'high imperialism'. Some overlook such a change, instead seeing empire and colonialism as coherent, even monolithic, influences on British history writing from the 1750s. If still others discern a growing historical concern for the empire of white settlement and distaste for the subject empire, they nonetheless explain those swings as 'lapses' or 'unconscious racism'—the un-expunged stain of mid-Victorian pseudoscience.[10] And yet, as the opening chapters of this book will show, imperial history's foundational voices openly and explicitly endeavored to define race in ways that were not biological. Explaining the rise of imperial history therefore raises the bigger issue of why and how influential thinkers used history to make difference in specific contexts, and the legacies of their strategies and tactics.

Taking the early field of imperial history as their backbone, and attentive to trends crosscutting the historical profession at large, the following chapters trace the rise of an exclusionary historical consciousness in Britain that promoted the white settler colonies while discounting vast populations under 'alien' rule. Within and around the new profession, scholars and politicians pushed agendas and institutions which celebrated the settlement and growth of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and to an extent Southern Africa, as parts of a Greater British polity, with frequent, energetic gestures toward the United States. At the same time, they actively disqualified and then sought to ignore vast areas of empire in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Their most dexterous act of exclusion took place with regard to India. Imperial historians, following John Seeley, either portrayed the history of the Raj as a secondary formation unrelated to 'Greater Britain', or wrote it off as a phenomenal aberration best left to 'India hands' and theorists of subject empire. The latter may have protested. Lords Curzon and Cromer, for example, bemoaned their failure to generate resounding interest in their projects and legacies against the entrenched metropolitan belief that the settler colonies simply mattered more, and more immediately, than India or a wider dependent empire. But they also recognized that theirs was an uphill battle.[11]

Theories had consequences. Historical devices came to underpin political struggles over race, migration, and governance that pitted different imperial populations against one another and enabled the imperial center's complicity in exclusionary settler policies which alienated vast

constituencies of Asian, Caribbean, and African subjects through the 1890s and 1900s. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the combined effect of segregationist history and settler-world discrimination was to establish 'empire' as synonymous with 'the color line'.[12] Not despite but because of its pretenses, British academic and political engagement with the past both reflected and propelled the wider project of making a divided empire wherein the crucial distinction lay not between metropole and periphery, but ultimately between white and non-white. For all the platitudes of a Seeley or a Joseph Chamberlain, biological and historical racism were anything but mutually exclusive.[13] A powerful constellation of actors designed and drew on historical thinking to put up barriers between past and future, backwardness and civilization, at once validating racial discrimination while absolving their projects of racism. In response, colonial nationalist demands for equal opportunity, mobility, and representation grew increasingly forceful in imperial affairs, fronted by activists like Mohandas Gandhi who had been denouncing two-empire historicism and settler-world discrimination for some years before metropolitan bellwethers like Curtis and Low ever voiced concern.[14] Though the following chapters do not fully address anticolonial and postcolonial politics, they do provide insight into the grounds and tactics of early anticolonial struggle, as well as how settler chauvinism persisted in imperial and Commonwealth affairs well into the era of decolonization.[15]

Along these lines, the story of imperial history allows us to perceive more clearly several key aspects of intellectual and political life in modern Britain and empire. First, it allows us to register the distinctions between component parts of empire as they held salience for contemporaries. While John Darwin has convincingly delineated the moving parts of the nineteenth-century British world-system, and Alan Lester and Andrew Thompson its networks, much remains to be understood about contemporary perceptions of political geography—indeed, tectonics.[16] Men and women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to very different conclusions when they talked about the British imperial past from those we draw today. They believed that phases of empire building had given them India as a holdover from eighteenth-century wars with France, and that the lands of white settlement were products of nineteenth-century social energies reflecting higher providential design. They hesitated to engage Egypt or sub-Saharan Africa; British rule there was new, unstable, and, many seemed to suspect, transitory. But it was not enough to just draw lines on a map in a time of rapid and sometimes paralyzing global

connectivity. Contemporaries, led by historical authorities, rallied to the notion that these parts of the empire existed in separate historical spaces. The political morality that applied to the British diaspora needed not apply to, say, an Indian empire frozen in the distant past, or African realms catapulted from primitive oblivion to the shock of the modern.

This view of the British Empire as a politically and temporally unstable concept, and as a fractious global polity, offers a friendly corrective to other recent emphases in imperial history. While moving away from an expository concern with conquest and subject rule—as well as from the rebuttal that empire mattered little at all to Britain[17]—historians of Britain and its empire have found themselves, since 2002, in a long settler-world moment. Some have sought to refocus on Greater Britain or the 'Anglosphere', leading others to protest the sidelining of histories of injustice toward colonized groups and the Global South.[18] While providing crucial perspective, an emphasis on the settler world nonetheless obscures a more complete history of Britain and empire that would put the components of that empire in conceptual relation.[19] The immigration networks, commercial circuitry, and labor markets affecting the lives of metropolitan Britons, supposedly dependent subjects, and white settlers alike existed in tension and competition. This relationship was ideological and political as well as economic. And so the emergence of imperial history as a field in the 1880s exposed a clash between multiple ideas of imperial belonging. Rather than naturalizing the ascent of white settlerism, this book sheds new light on the drivers that put such a movement into conflict with the rights of the majority of Britain's imperial subjects, and suggests the import of that encounter in the longer term.

Finally, the pages that follow help us see, sometimes uncomfortably, the competing moral logics that motivated and structured the endeavors of Britons, some reluctantly global, others triumphantly so, through a pivotal phase in the making of our times. Imperialism was not a coherent impulse emanating outward from Britain. Nor did it consistently take as its counterpart what we today recognize as 'colonialism': the matrix of unequal political economic, cultural, and psychological transactions between colonizing and colonized peoples.[20] Many self-professed imperialists, including those influential in the founding of imperial history, hardly registered the 'colonized'—at least not until quite late in the game, if we think of Curtis and Low. Their anxieties lay instead with mass democratic politics, urbanization and poverty, 'national fitness', and the sustainability of a clubbish world order. This may seem an odd note to sound given the sharp turn imperial

history took halfway through its career, some 70 years after its founding, toward seeking the causes of expansion among local societies on the periphery, in no small part looking to restore agency to peoples and polities that earlier generations had refused to acknowledge.[21] Far from disregarding those later interventions, this book offers a better understanding of the precedents as well as limits that defined such achievements.

Modern British imperialism was deeply fraught and internally contested. Imperial history was composed by earnest political thinkers in moments of intense soul-searching. Could the masses participate in high-minded civic life and comprehend the complexities of international politics? Was Britain fit to stand in a world of competitive super-states? The fields that people made and histories they designed reflected those dilemmas and fears. And so it was not preordained that imperial populations should be shunted off to historical holding pens. It was a product of contingent moral engagement. The past was conceived in terms of a specific future—indeed, broken up into different pasts—and present experience subordinated to the 'horizon of expectation'.[22] Time regimes reflected lived conflict. 'The waiting room of history' materialized, with a specific location and big-name architects.[23] In the hands of practitioners concerned with Britain's imperial fate, and shifting continuously between disciplinary and political forms, historical thought in and beyond Britain circa 1880–1940 fueled and validated a politics of exclusion that resonated to the core of international life.

Overview

Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion describes the rise of imperial history, in practice and in theory, and the often embattled individuals, groups, and institutions that inserted its specific logic into wider public outreach, propaganda, and policymaking. It begins by probing the rise in the 1880s of a historical model that divided the British Empire into unequal parts, pinpointing John Seeley's celebrated history *The Expansion of England* (1883) as the founding exposition of two-empire theory. It then profiles Seeley's scholarly contemporaries and the hitching of their theories to discriminatory legislation in Australia, Canada, and South Africa, before tracing the institutionalization of imperial history through the political storms and imperial crises of the Edwardian era into the First World War. Crucially, it registers dissent: with the dawn of the new century, voices deliberately shut out from the history and the 'now' of imperial

politics rose in protest against the empire's Anglo-exclusive arc. Anticolonialism in the British Empire insisted on historical commensurability before it articulated betrayal and demanded separate trajectories. When historians and policy intellectuals in the interwar years attempted to address the restive empire in all its diversity, their appeals to an ordered community of rights plowed up against the limits of the racialized, pro-settler historical framework in which they had developed their own thinking.

Following a sketch of the mid-Victorian developments that made history and historical time newly instrumental in the politics of empire, Chap. 2 turns to the moment long hailed as the 'birth' of imperial history, asking why Seeley, as Cambridge Regius Professor, published *The Expansion of England* in 1883), and why he drew a stark division between the settler colonies and India. It finds he did so largely in response to what he perceived as a crisis in metropolitan civic life occasioned by the expansion of the electorate. Chief among his theoretical innovations, Seeley made a painstaking distinction between India and the settler colonies, telling the world that Britain's future lay with the diaspora and not the Raj. After examining Seeley's argument alongside his engagement with current affairs, this chapter puts him in conversation with Indian administrators Alfred Lyall and H. S. Maine, a comparison that reveals a deep division between liberal imperialists over the interpretation of historical processes and the nature of the Britain's empire, and correct use of its history for policymaking. A final section considers Seeley's legacy. While his single-mindedness led to a backlash at Cambridge and his distaste for Oxford constitutionalism placed him outside the mainstream of the wider historical profession, the fervor with which Seeley preached the moral significance of history ensured that his example remained accessible to later scholars and activists who hitched his binary interpretation of the empire to their own methodological concerns.

The contrivance by which Seeley separated India from a so-called Greater Britain, the hailing of two empires, became the basis for a real and momentous rift. Chapter 3 reconstructs the wider historicist underpinnings for campaigns which successfully championed settler colonialism and denied political and economic rights to non-whites throughout the British Empire in the late nineteenth century. Although Seeley painstakingly emphasized the English state as the subject of imperial history, other prominent scholars such as E. A. Freeman, James Bryce, and J. A. Froude alternately identified constitutions, representative government, law, and

heroic leadership as the central lines of an expansive Anglo-Saxon past. These historians defended the prerogative of settler societies to discriminate against populations of African and Asian descent. Colonial leaders seeking to consolidate constituencies and exclude non-whites in Australia, Canada, Cape Colony, and the United States, in turn, appealed to Anglo-American scholarship for guidance. The combined weight of historical authority in Britain fell behind wider campaigns for colonial emigration and closer relations with the self-governing colonies and America. In doing so, it informed and justified exclusionary legislation such as 'White Australia' and the Natal Acts. The flipside of a historicism promoting Anglo-Saxon solidarity was the exclusion of a vast imperial constituency. India's place and role in the British Empire grew increasingly uncertain, even for the Raj's house theorists. Empire and the color line were syncing.

Chapter 4 explains why exclusionary two-empire theory gave rise to the first and highly enduring institution devoted to colonial, later imperial, history in Britain. It reconnects the settler-colonial vision to questions of domestic reform, and considers the rise of idealism at Oxford as an essential component of the intellectual milieu that influenced one of the era's most influential statesmen, Alfred Milner. Milner led Britain into a devastating war in South Africa because he and likeminded planners perceived Boer political recalcitrance as an unprecedented threat to a prospering Anglo-Saxon settler realm. The Boer War, thus in part brought about by a historical vision of geopolitics, gave that vision new form via the activism and knowledge-making of young Oxonians who came of age during South African reconstruction. The Beit Chair of Colonial History at Oxford in 1905, proposed by a young Leo Amery and premised on the exclusion of India and the dependencies, was one significant product. Chapter 5, then, considers how the core beliefs behind the Beit Chair somewhat paradoxically led to the early failings of that Oxford program while bringing about the convulsion of wider Edwardian imperial politics. The anti-Free Trade movement, of which Amery served in the vanguard, opened up a vast rift from 1903. A Conservative Party which had studiously defined itself as 'the party of empire' split over the fiscal question. Tariff reform became the great moral test of the day. Yet Amery's Beit Chair represented a common ground forged by both sides of the all-consuming tariff debate at the expense of Britain's dependent constituencies: a settler-citizen ideology based on self-sacrifice, localism translating to imperial loyalty, and shared political tradition. The chapter closes by examining the backlash raised by

related exclusionary policies in the dependent empire before the First World War. Indian and African nationalisms produced newly organized campaigns that demanded the immediate reform not only of British rule but of Dominion-dependency relations. Those ultimatums reflected and were exacerbated by Dominion intransigence on questions of race and 'Asiatic' immigration—an impasse that appeared suddenly, to thinkers such as Lionel Curtis and Sidney Low, as the momentous question of the day.

But these formative articulations of anticolonialism were soon to be swept up, at least at the imperial level, in the tumult of the First World War. When interwar imperial theorists returned to them, they fell back on the totems of pre-war contests. Chapter 6 examines the dual effects of wartime mobilization as it drew parts of the British Empire closer in cooperation but also exacerbated tensions over political inequality and hollow promises of reform. British historians and public intellectuals went to war as experts for the Foreign Office and War Office, and filled out the ranks of the newly devoted propaganda units, Wellington House and the Ministry of Information. Their task was to craft a new narrative for the British Empire, one that disavowed Teutonic relations, drew Britain closer to the United States, and diffused outrage over the persistence of racial discrimination and authoritarian rule. Britain's wartime propaganda and information apparatus, as well as the soon-to-be reconsolidated historical profession, embodied the need to obscure authoritarian rule insofar as doing so could win American support and promote imperial stability. Yet the very currency of these narratives threatened to expose anew the iniquities of Britain's imperial system just as Indian, Irish, Caribbean, and African activists were rejecting overdue guarantees of representation and inclusion. Academic imperial history, expanded and increasingly professionalized after the war, lightly registered this swing. The more revealing developments came at the persistent intersection between history and policy.

From this point, Chap. 7 explores how and why competing visions for Britain's empire were uneasily reconciled after the First World War, with fateful implications for the later conduct of decolonization. Influential imperial theorists such as Lionel Curtis, Alfred Zimmern, and Reginald Coupland took stock of the possibilities and dangers that attended the reconstruction of international life, and proposed a new ordering device—the 'Third British Empire'—a policy-oriented conceit which reiterated the stadial, progressive nature of British rule around the world. Yet this model of empire-into-commonwealth, as conceived by men who came of age as settler-colonial advocates in the 1900s, relied on the expectation of

self-segregation. While the First World War seemingly forced British thinkers to incorporate Africans and Asians into a previously exclusionary constitutional narrative, such a shift, in reality, only exacerbated a deep tension between a language of rights and a racism founded on historical difference. A settler-oriented notion of citizenship, when applied to cases of imperial reform such as the 1928 Simon Commission, morphed into an ideal of separation, localism, and individualism which further detached meaningful political change in the dependencies from the heart of imperial theory. The 1930s saw the unraveling of the three Oxford theorists' hopes and prescriptions, and the rise of younger historians seeking a basis for a post-imperial Commonwealth, who assailed the arrogance of their settler-world predecessors. By 1940, uncertainty and the spectacle of anticolonial revolt overshadowed the moral and practical confidence of an early imperial history.

And yet, the language of historical difference stuck. The conclusion foreshadows the reactivation of gradational progress narratives and historical constitutionalism during and after the Second World War. It further reflects on the impossible fit between historically specific ideals of self-government and democratic community, and the intensely fraught, unscripted demands of decolonization. Among its many afterlives, the language of historical difference warped British and international responses to South Asia's cataclysmic experience of decolonization and partition in 1947. In the 1950s, it led to poignant intellectual attempts to understand the forces that brought together seemingly incompatible spheres into a single political system in the first place. A wider, collaborative research agenda may seek the ways historical racism contributed to embedding inequality in, and as, institutions in postcolonial Britain and throughout the former 'Anglo-Saxon' world.[24]

History and the Imperial Victorians

Before any talk of endings, the trajectory of exclusionary imperial history after 1880 requires grounding in its three key Victorian antecedents: changing conceptions of time and the human past, the broader 'crisis of liberal imperialism',[25] and the rise of history itself as a discipline.

Insofar as imperial history segregated populations across historical space, it reflected a dialogue between perceptions of both acceleration and deep time unique to the nineteenth century. The sæculum—perceived as a lifetime, the phase within the cycle of population renewal, or the domain of

material experience rather than eternity—took on contested shape and meaning in Victorian Britain.[26] In one key sense, the sæculum was compressed, as technology dissolved barriers of distance and duration between Britain, empire, and world. The first steamship crossed the Atlantic in 1833. Telegraphic cables linked the British Isles to continental, American, and imperial hubs between 1851 and 1879.[27] As Britain urbanized, common clocks and concepts of public time increasingly governed the population's work and leisure. Newly avowed historical practitioners, in turn, moved from cyclical models of stasis and change to a pronouncedly dense and linear framework.[28] Yet the sæculum also suddenly extended backward in the extreme. Early Victorian archaeology and the scientific discovery of prehistoric time made it possible to imagine human beings existing in a distant past. The idea of the 'antiquity of man' achieved currency through the discovery of protohuman remains alongside those of extinct mammals in Devon's Brixham Cave in 1858 and 1859, and was enshrined in geologist Charles Lyell's exposition of a human timeline that extended far beyond anything in the Bible.[29] By mid-century, reading publics could register prehistoric, ancient, medieval, and modern eras as material and distinct, and nascent scholarly fields could commit themselves to explaining human differentiation extended across epochs. This newly stretched model of human time took two initial disciplinary forms: evolutionism in the natural sciences and, tellingly but less respectably, a pseudoscientific racialism which presented itself at mid-century as 'anthropology'. Professional history in subsequent decades, along with the social sciences,[30] would take up this temporal elongation and negotiation between the extreme past and future.

Insofar as imperial history, then, would classify human groups and epochs normatively and would doubt the capacity of supposedly inferior peoples to move or accelerate between civilizational coordinates, it relayed the verdict of mid-Victorian debates about universal progress. Michael Geyer and Charles Bright have proposed that the mid-nineteenth century marked a crisis of globalization: 'the consolidation of global circuits of money, markets, knowledge, and force' in which 'Imperial expansion through space was left behind in favor of the imperialist control of time'. In imperial Britain, the sense of radical connection exacerbated anxiety and debate about domestic social decay and violent colonial crises from the 1830s through the 1860s. 'Imperialist control of time' took on a defensive mode in the form of theoretical and policy reconstruction which vacated universalism for authoritarian liberalism and culturalism in the empire of

rule.[31] If the populations of the world had grown too close for comfort, the discovery of prehistoric and evolutionary scales provided crucial space just when the present seemed at risk of collapse.

Although Charles Darwin and major contemporaries rejected theories of polygenesis,[32] debate raged about typological difference in the modern world and the fortunes of a racially mixed empire. Anti-humanitarian reactions to colonial unrest commixed with the decline of ethnology and rise of racialist anthropology. In the West Indies, the post-emancipation crisis of the sugar industry led to broad condemnation of freed slaves' supposed 'laziness' and civic incapacity. Meanwhile, in India, the uprising which spread across the north of the subcontinent in 1857–1858 convinced a vast audience in Britain, the settler colonies, and beyond that imperial benevolence would only beget ingratitude and savagery from alien, non-white subjects. An economic rebellion in October 1865 at Morant Bay, Jamaica, coming just months after the conclusion of the American Civil War, was held as further proof of humanitarian soft mindedness and failed universalist hopes, conclusions that metropolitan supporters of Governor Edward Eyre advertised loudly in the ensuing firestorm over Eyre's brutal repression of the rebellion.[33] These global inputs were compounded by a burst of strident pseudoscientific activity in London, characterized by the brief ascent of speech therapist and aspiring racial theorist James Hunt. Hunt is now infamous for founding the Anthropological Society in 1863. Posterity soon recognized him as a hack. But in his day, Hunt stood just outside respectable opinion in his demands for the abandonment of 'ethnography' for a defense of racial 'quality' and European superiority.[34] And in a curious twist linking mid-Victorian pseudoscience and history, Hunt provided speech therapy in London to Charles Kingsley, John Seeley's immediate predecessor in the Regius Chair at Cambridge. The shift from 'amateur' to professional history thus transpired in a moment suffused with contemporary debates over human difference.[35]

A Broad Churchman and sanitary reformer, Kingsley was among the last of the so-called literary historians to hold a major chair in Britain. In his own reactionary swing to the scientific, however, he presaged the eclipse of the literary approach to the past. Kingsley's 1860 inaugural lecture had criticized the rising demand for 'philosophies of History' brought on by the 'general spread of Inductive Science' in the universities and governing ranks: 'the rapid progress of science is tempting us to look at human beings rather as things than as persons, and at abstractions (under the name of

laws) rather as persons than things'.[36] Kingsley found a cool reception as Regius from a scholarly community looking for greater scientific justification, to the point of being hounded mercilessly for his lack of method by Oxford's E. A. Freeman. And yet, even if he never came to accept a science of history, Kingsley was soon converted to what he believed to be the truth of science. In 1871, having retired from Cambridge, Kingsley declared that 'Physical science is proving more and more the immense importance of Race… that competition between every race and every individual of that race… is (as far as we can see) a universal law of living things. And she says —for the facts of history prove it—that as it is among the races of plants and animals, so it has been unto this day among the races of men'. Freed from the responsibilities of speaking for history, Kingsley let science, illuminated by historical 'facts', spell out the requirements of a forward-looking natural theology.[37]

And so, professional history took shape as the striking product of an era gripped by both the promise and impossibility of omniscient universalism,[38] amidst major developments in political and scientific thought which repositioned human affairs on a vast timescale. Informed by German and American practice and motivated by the larger controversies of the age, the first anointed historical experts in British universities sought, from the 1870s, to base social doctrine on the avowedly scientific study of the past. Although some such as William Stubbs would become synonymous with British history as an island story, they nonetheless inspired powerful ways of viewing and explaining empire. Indeed, the appointment of Stubbs, an unknown archival workhorse and early medieval specialist, to the Oxford Regius Chair in 1866, in the midst of Kingsley's tenure at Cambridge, signaled the transformation of the discipline. Historians in general were, by the 1860s, in the midst of defining their aims, inquiries and materials more scrupulously.[39] The field narrowed in scope—centering on the codes, statutes, and state records, with emphasis on the Middle Ages. A 'national and specifically political history' focusing on the origins and development of the English constitution, with its attendant standards of scholarship, took root in the new schools of history established at Oxford and Cambridge in the 1870s, and dominated the Oxford and London-based profession well into the next century.[40]

This narrowing reflected demands prevailing among the intellectual community more widely to address growing concerns that a social storm might be brewing in Britain, a sense that underpinned reactions to the electoral reforms of the 1860s and the agrarian agitations of the 1870s; and

to find a remedy based on scientific, evolutionary, and historical lines. Stubbs was a Tory High Churchman posted to Oxford by the third Derby-Disraeli ministry to redress the supposed excesses of his immediate predecessor, the radical Goldwin Smith. Smith had been a lightning rod for controversies within the university and in wider imperial politics; the cabinet 'were bent on a safe political appointment—someone who was a Conservative and a sound churchman'. Stubbs fit this bill, and all the more so for the blending of views which had taken him from youthful evangelicalism to the mindful, post-Tractarian parochialism of his adult career.[41] Moreover, he provided an innovative rationale for the study of modern history, albeit couched in supremely conservative language. Whereas many of his historical contemporaries won fame for narrative chronicles, Stubbs, on the face of it, eschewed storytelling for 'sheer simple work'. Students needed to learn the past, not theorize it—a belief which explained the fact that Stubbs's most replicated work was essentially a documentary reader.[42] This maneuver allowed Stubbs to apply the brake to Victorian progress narratives that he believed had become overly political, and to reinsert and elevate the Church in an authoritative accounting of the English past.[43] But Stubbs's methodology remained rooted in an evolutionary moment in which questions of 'heredity' and 'race' drove the study of national development, and the seeking of a formula for social cohesion. Stubbs himself used the word 'race' liberally in his writing, and announced in his inaugural lecture that 'There is… in common with Natural Science, in the Study of Living History, a gradual approximation to a consciousness that we are growing into a perception of the workings of the Almighty Ruler of the world … that we are coming to see… a hand of justice and mercy, a hand of progress and order…'.[44]

Stubbs went on to dazzle both conservative and liberal opinion with his accounts of English political development and stability, encoded in the canon of an unwritten constitution, full-fledged by the late medieval period, and his championing of a science of history that preserved the element of Anglican religion in the lifeblood of the English polity. In 1870, he published the *Select Charters*, one of the most influential and iconic works of modern British history, in which he declared that the study of English constitutional history was 'essentially a tracing of the causes and consequences; the examination of a distinct growth from a well-defined germ to full maturity… whose life and developing power lies deep in the very nature of the people'. In a time of flux and increasing domestic discontent, Stubbs did away with discord: English constitutional history was 'not then the

collection of a multitude of facts and views, but the piecing of the links of a perfect chain' which extended from the earliest Saxon settlers in their primitive majesty to the present day.[45] Stubbs's histories and readers continued to define the historical curricula of British universities through the 1950s, impressing on students the requirements of constitutional and parliamentary evolution as the essence of the legitimate modern state.[46]

As for the precipitation of imperial history as a field and moral pursuit, Stubbs factored into this development in two ways. First, and simply, his work was central to the emergent Whig interpretation of the English constitution, in which Anglo-Saxons carried, as if in their genetic makeup, a love for individual liberty and a genius for local self-government. Though this constitutional strain of thought would be referenced skeptically by Seeley in 1883, it gathered significant traction among his contemporaries and was invoked very deliberately by the founders of the first professorship in the new field, the Beit Chair of Colonial History, in 1904. Second, imperial controversy itself shaped Stubbs's documenting of English history. Stubbs was appointed Regius Professor on the recommendation of a Tory Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, whose immediate task was the federation of Canada. Carnarvon himself had learned one key lesson from the imperial past, as he told a New Brunswick audience in September 1867: 'Once in the history of England it so happened that we parted from some of our great Colonies with a bad spirit and in a misunderstanding.... This has taught us a useful lesson [and] it taught the Colonies also—that their interests properly understood are not separate and distinct; but that the more prosperous the Colonies are, the greater will be the strength they confer on the Mother Country'.[47] Beyond his desire to install a solid Tory churchman in the Regius Chair, Carnarvon also believed that history, properly interpreted, would resolve the colonial questions of the day in favor of formal consolidation.

In this context, Stubbs's studied focus on the confederating genius of medieval England was an inherently political position,[48] not the least because his predecessor, Smith, had been an ardent advocate of colonial independence. Further, the first pages of *The Select Charters*, Stubbs's most replicated work, were a paean to settler colonialism. Therein he insisted that the sixth-century occupation of Britain by Germanic peoples was 'a migration and not a mere conquest'. Untouched by Roman influences, the Saxons brought with them distinct colonial institutions and organization. 'In the first place, a nation moving in mass has not to learn the first lessons

of colonial life… The system, such as it is, is transported whole, at the point of development which it has reached at home. But, in the second place, it will be modified and advanced by the very process of migration: the necessity of order and cohesion will have strengthened the cohesion of the mass'. The princeps who moved his people 'founds a new royalty and nobility in his own person. … The king of the new land is much stronger than the king, the dux, or the princeps of the old'. Saxon migration elevated the standards of political legitimacy.[49]

With Stubbs, professional history began to work as a sorting mechanism for the problems of an imperial state. Expansive settlement was good and inherent in the English past. Moreover, periodization, the parts of Stubbs's great chain, established where in time England existed, now along with its colonial offshoots and the Celtic periphery it had brought into history, as well as which chapters in history England had passed through, vacated, and closed. In Stubbs's narrative, modern England was forever cut off from the ancient, pre-Christian world that birthed modern Mediterranean societies, reflecting Stubbs's commitment to guarding the Church at the core of national development.[50] Moreover, England had surged forth fully formed from the Middle Ages, consolidated as one nation under Henry II and his sons. The early medieval period had been for England 'one… of continuous growing together and new development which distinguishes the process of organic life from that of mere mechanic contrivance, internal law from external order'. And while the English nation may have found 'its first distinct expression in Magna Carta', Magna Carta's significance lay in its revelation of the nation as *fait accompli* rather than any further innovation. Magna Carta marked transcendence.[51] Yet nowhere in his main writings did Stubbs intimate that England's trajectory away from the shadow of Rome and out from the Middle Ages heralded a universal pattern.[52]

Stubbs held the Regius Chair of Modern History at Oxford from 1866 until 1884, when Gladstone made him the Bishop of Chester. In the midst of Stubbs's tenure, in 1869, Charles Kingsley resigned the corresponding Regius Chair at Cambridge. Gladstone was faced with the task of finding an occupant who could match Stubbs's stature and seriousness. After much wrangling, the Prime Minister appointed John Seeley to the other most prominent seat in the British historical profession. Fifteen years later, as the next two chapters show, that choice would have fateful repercussions well beyond the fens.

Notes

1. Curtis to Kerr, 12 January 1912, Papers of Lionel Curtis and the Round Table, MS Eng.hist.c. 106, ff. 110–117, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Also quoted in Deborah Lavin, 'Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth' in A. F. Madden and D. K. Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth: Essays Presented to Sir Edgar Williams* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 104. Milner's 'Kindergarten', as it formed the core of the Round Table policy group from 1909, was a group of recent Oxford graduates employed or otherwise mentored by High Commissioner Alfred Milner in reconstruction-era Southern Africa. Andrea Bosco and Alex May, *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), i.
2. Sidney Low, 'The Organization of Imperial Studies in London', 27 November 1912. Reprinted in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 491.
3. For discussions of historical professionalization and history's prominence in mid- and late-Victorian public life, see especially Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, 2011); Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). On the relationship between emergent forms of natural and social scientific knowledge and structures and politics of imperial rule in the nineteenth century, see such diverse works as Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Martin Daunton and Frank Trentmann (eds.), *Worlds of Political Economy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); James Hevia, *The Imperial Security State: British Colonial Knowledge and Empire-building in Asia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); J. M. Hodge and B. M. Bennett (eds.). *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science across the British Empire, 1800–1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

4. This formulation borrows from Ann Stoler's well-phrased observations: 'Racism is commonly understood as a visual ideology in which somatic features are thought to provide the crucial criteria of membership. But racism is not really a visual ideology at all; physiological attributes only signal the nonvisual and more salient distinctions of exclusion upon which racism rests'. 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia' in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 203.
5. The theme of pre-1945 imperial self-interest permeates twentieth-century international history as well as imperial and postcolonial history. Distinguishing U.S. and Soviet interventions in the Third World from the 'exploitation' and 'subjection' of European expansion, Odd Arne Westad writes that European imperialism before the Cold War got its 'social consciousness almost as an afterthought'. Mark Mazower goes to an opposite extreme, arguing that the persistence of imperial forms in post-1945 internationalism revealed a recidivist Western fetish for authoritarian rule. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). For reflections on imperial 'contradiction', see John Darwin, *The Empire Project,* xi; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 137, 246, 310, 340, and *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), xxiii, 234, 258; Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge:, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. 23; Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), xxv, xxiii, 38, 215; Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 338–340; Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. i–xii, 51, 58–59, 160–234, Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
6. As Karuna Mantena has observed in her own work on the rise of culturalism in mid-Victorian imperial theory. Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 185–187.
7. Berber Bevernage and Chris Lorenz, 'Breaking up Time. Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future', *Storia della Storiographia*, 63:1

(2013), 31–50. See also François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, 'Human Rights and History', *Past and Present*, 231:2 (August 2016), 303–304; and Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), esp. 255–277 and *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002).

8. An earlier canon would include Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 3 vols. (London: Gorge Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1598–1600); Peter C. Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); William Jones, 'On Asiatic History, Civil and Natural' [1793] in *Discourses Delivered before the Asiatic Society and Miscellaneous Papers on the Religion, Poetry, Literature,* Etc. *of the Nations of India* (London, Charles. S. Arnold, 1824), 17–35; James Mill, *The History of British India*, 3 vols. (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1817); Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols., (London: John Murray, 1817).
9. Frank Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xi–xii, 3–4, 55, 322; John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*: *Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 3–6, 174; Soffer, *Discipline and Power*.
10. Wm. Roger Louis, 'Introduction' in Robin Winks, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. V: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3, 9–10; Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 338–340; Joanna de Groot, *Empire and History Writing in Britain, c.1750–2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), esp. 4–7. Andrew S. Thompson points out India's absence in early imperial history, and Duncan Bell addresses, but does not delve substantially into, the myopia and discomfort which characterized the encounters between theorists of 'Greater Britain' and India. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880–1932* (London: Longman, 2000), 18–19; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
11. See, for example, Evelyn Baring, Earl of Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (London: John Murray, 1910), 15–16. On administrators' long-running attempts to paper over the persistently 'ad hoc', 'anxious', and 'chaotic' nature of British rule in India, see Jon Wilson, *The Chaos of*

Empire: The British Raj and the Conquest of India (New York: Public Affairs, 2016), esp. 1–9.

12. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
13. This point recalls Paul Gilroy's dismantling of Benedict Anderson's distinction between racism and nationalism, in which Anderson had asserted that nationalism 'thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations…'. Gilroy, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (London: Routledge, 1992), 43; Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 136.
14. On Gandhi's appeals to Britannic rights, especially during his years in Natal, see Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 114–135 and Amanda Behm, 'Settler Historicism and Anticolonial Rebuttal in the British World, 1880–1920', *Journal of World History*, 26:4 (December 2015), 785–713.
15. On anticolonial and postcolonial visions of the past, uses of history, and temporal politics, see especially David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004) and *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
16. Darwin, *The Empire Project*; Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
17. Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).
18. Works which speak to the 'settler world' turn include Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1780–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, 'Mapping the British World' in Bridge and Fedorowich, eds., *The British World: Diaspora, Culture Identity* (London, Frank Cass, 2003), 1–15; Philip Buckner, 'Introduction: Canada and the British Empire' in *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1–21; A. G. Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization', *Past and Present*, 200:1 (2008), 211–247; and Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, esp. x–xi.

19. For synthetic approaches, see Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001) and Darwin, *Empire Project*. Lester's is a particularly useful critical model.
20. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1–2.
21. Robinson and Gallagher's famous observations on Africa and India include 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review Economic History Review* 6:1 (1953), 1–15; Robinson and Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (1961); and Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration' in Louis (ed.), *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York, New Viewpoints), 128–151.
22. Hoffmann, 'Human Rights and History', article page 26; Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 113, 191; Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 255–277.
23. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3–27, esp. 8; Jon Wilson, 'Taking Europe for Granted', *History Workshop Journal*, 25 (Autumn 2001), 287–288.
24. Todd Shepard's careful engagement with post-1945 French 'racial thinking without "race"' serves as one template. Shepard, 'Making French and European Coincide: Decolonization and the Politics of Comparative and Transnational Histories', *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2007), 343 and *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). Shepard cites Etienne Balibar's formulation in Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Classe. Les Identités Ambiguës*. 2nd edn. (Paris: La Découverte, 1997).
25. On the confluence of imperial conflicts and ideological shifts that Karuna Mantena terms 'the crisis of liberal imperialism', see her *Alibis of Empire*, 21–55.
26. As Philippa Levine explains, 'In such a context, history was to acquire powerful human appeal as the intellectual mechanism whereby time could be measured and evaluated'. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time: 1870–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 3–4; Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*, 101–127; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, chapter 2; Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, 'Benchmarks of Globalization: The Global Condition, 1850–2010', in Douglas Northrop, ed., *A Companion to World History* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 288–294 and 'Global Violence

and Nationalizing Wars in Eurasia and America: the Geopolitics of War in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38:4 (October 1996), 619–657; and Daniel R. Headrick, *Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). On the emergence and implications of temporal distancing in the nascent Western social sciences, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983, reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), esp. 1–2, 11–35.

27. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 74–80; Headrick, *Tools of Empire*.
28. Boyd Hilton, *Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 3–35; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*. Thomas Carlyle and J. A. Froude were influential exceptions to this trend, and will be discussed in Chap. 3.
29. Charles Lyell, *Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man: With Remarks on the Origin of Species by Variation* (London: John Murray, 1863),
30. Fabian, *Time and the Other*, xxxiii–36.
31. Geyer and Bright, 'Benchmarks of Globalization', 285–299, and 'Global Violence and Nationalizing Wars', Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, 21–55; Seymour Drescher, 'The Ending of the Slave Trade and the Evolution of European Scientific Racism', *Social Science History*, 14:3 (Fall 1990), 415–450; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), esp. 49, 56; and Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857–1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).
32. Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
33. Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, 21–55; Catherine Hall, 'Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre', in Hall, *White, Male, and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), 255–295.
34. James Hunt, 'Third Annual Address', *Anthropological Review*, 4 (1866).
35. David M. Levy, *How the Dismal Science Got Its Name: Classical Economics and the Ur-Text of Racial Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 103–109; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*.
36. Turner, *Contesting Cultural* Authority, 55; Charles Kingsley, *The Limits of Exact Science as Applied to History: An Inaugural Lecture, Delivered before the University of Cambridge* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1860), 8–9.

37. Charles Kingsley, 'The Natural Theology of the Future' [10 January 1871] in *Scientific Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), 323–324.
38. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Christopher Herbert, *Victorian Relativity: Radical Thought and Scientific Discovery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
39. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 75–87.
40. P. R. Ghosh, 'Macaulay and the Heritage of the Enlightenment', *English Historical Review*, 112:446 (April 1997), 360; Anthony Brundage and Richard Cosgrove, *The Great Tradition: Constitutional History and National Identity in Britain and the United States, 1870–1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 2–3; Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 101; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 75. Quote from Levine.
41. N. J. Williams, 'Stubbs's Appointment as Regius Professor, 1866', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 33:87 (May 1960), 121–125. For the significance of E. B. Pusey's influence on Stubbs, and for the Tractarians' interest in medievalism, see Simon Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
42. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 76.
43. For Stubbs's enduring views on the importance of realigning political histories to include ecclesiastical material, see 'Remarks and proposals made by Dr. Stubbs before the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts on the 14th of July, 1881', Stubbs papers, MS 4455, ff. 1–2, Lambeth Palace Archives, London.
44. William Stubbs, *An Address Delivered by Way of Inaugural Lecture, February 7, 1867* (London: J. Parker and Company, 1867). Quoted in William Holden Hutton, ed., *Letters of William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, 1825–1901* (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1904), 216.
45. William Stubbs, *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History from the Earliest Times to the Reign of Edward the First*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874), v.
46. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 10-30, 90.
47. Arthur Henry Hardinge, *The Life of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, 1831–1890*, ed. Elisabeth, countess of Carnarvon, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 300–301. Quoted in Peter Gordon, 'Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux, fourth earl of Carnarvon (1831–1890),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13035?docPos=4, 29 September 2012.

48. Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England'*; Frank Turner, '*Tractarians and the "Condition of England": The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement'* [review], *Reviews in History,* no. 644, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/644, accessed 11 March 2014.
49. Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 6–7.
50. J. R. Green, for one, criticized Stubbs's hard separation of 'Modern" from 'Ancient' or 'pre-Christian' history. Green, 'Professor Stubbs's Inaugural Lecture', *Saturday Review*, 23:592 (2 March 1867), 278–280; Hutton, ed., *Letters of William Stubbs*, 120.
51. Stubbs, *Constitutional History,* chapter 13.
52. The boundedness of Stubbs's narrative and nationalist vision would leave a later generation ruing the fact he had not done more to bring medieval history into conversation with European scholars, or that it remained too far removed at universities from classical studies on one side and modern history on the other. Sidney Low to T. F. Tout, 1 March 1916, Papers of T. F. Tout, Mss. TFT/1/733/11-23, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester; T. F. Tout, 'The Present State of Mediaeval Studies in Great Britain', Presidential Address to the Mediaeval Section of the International Historical Congress, London, 4 April 1913, in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. IV (London: British Academy, 1914).

CHAPTER 2

Breaking Up the British Empire

John Seeley's *Expansion of England* appeared to imperial Britain as a revelation.[1] Seeley, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, had given two series of undergraduate lectures during the academic year 1881–1882, one on the growth of the British settler colonies and the other on the establishment of British rule in India. Although he had never written at length on either topic until this juncture, his long-standing publisher, Macmillan, eagerly released the lectures in one volume in autumn 1883.[2] The book was an immediate bestseller. Literary firms in Germany and France flooded Seeley and Macmillan with requests to reprint and translate. Statesmen and royals sent their compliments.[3] The *Expansion* went on to sell 80,000 copies within three years—a reach, as far as contemporary empire literature was concerned, only paralleled in 1886 by J. A. Froude's *Oceana*.[4]

The *Expansion* was a landmark event in metropolitan theorizing about the past and future of Britain's empire, and heralded by contemporaries and later generations as the foundational work of modern British imperial history. And yet, it was an oddity. Over the previous twenty years, Seeley, as moralist, historian, and don, had suffered degrees of critical infamy in response to his writings on Christ, and public disinterest regarding his foray into the study of Napoleonic-era Prussia.[5] Although his youthful determination 'to strike fire out of Christianity' by way of scholarship won the admiration of Gladstone—and thereby the Regius appointment—Seeley's

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subsequent insistence that the study of history could only be justified by its illustrative relation to political science drew a backlash from colleagues and fed the social discomfort that dogged his tenure at Cambridge from 1869.[6] In the success of the *Expansion*, Seeley found what had been long denied: a vast audience ready to embrace him as sage and visionary. Into one main theme, 'Greater Britain', he poured his long-standing preoccupations with lived Christianity, political morality, and nationality, and his message reached countless late-Victorians. In Oxford historian and educationist H. A. L. Fisher's later appraisal, the *Expansion* became 'a household book and a household phrase'.[7] An uncharacteristic side project became the defining issue of a career.

Since his death, Seeley has served to frame both the field of imperial history and wider imperial politics. At the turn of the twentieth century, Fisher—soon to become the Secretary of the Rhodes Trust and one of the most influential figures in British educational life—lauded the *Expansion* for distilling truths on which to found all public-minded historical study.[8] Forty years later, A. P. Newton, first Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College London, hearkened back to the *Expansion* as a rare historical work the publication of which could be deemed an 'event of national and even international importance'.[9] Seeley enjoyed a resurgence in the 1970s and 1980s, as imperial historians confronted the atomization of their field in the face of area studies and postcolonial criticism. Seeley became an anchor, 'largely responsible for establishing British Imperial history as a defined, recognised field of historical inquiry', with a specific 'system of ideas and a method of analysis that set the pattern for subsequent historical writings'.[10] Come the turn of the twenty-first century, Andrew Thompson began his chronology of modern imperial Britain with the publication of Seeley's *Expansion* as a historiographical monument and barometer of larger political currents. In the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, Roger Louis declared the *Expansion* 'among the greatest works by past masters in British history' for its bearing 'on the interpretation of the Empire's end, its purpose as well as its beginning'.[11]

Yet the motives and vision behind Seeley's turn to empire have received uneven, if some thoughtful, attention. The one major intellectual biography of Seeley emphasized his long absorption with church-state relations and glossed over the *Expansion* as a foray into more popular affairs. Duncan Bell, meanwhile, has more intently retraced the 'idiosyncratic route' that led Seeley from broad church theology to an emphasis on 'national glory

and unity as manifested in a federal Greater Britain'.[12] The roots of the *Expansion* were undoubtedly complex. They lay in struggles that characterized the two generations spanned by Seeley's lifetime—the struggle to reconcile religious belief with scientific calling, and to harness the laws of the human world, like the natural world, toward realizing a more perfect society. The *Expansion* was a manual of conduct for the expanding political nation as much as an attempt to describe and explain a past world. The British empire was the subject of this didacticism. The object was to prepare readers, from varied backgrounds, for a high level of political discussion, to in turn stabilize and strengthen relations between classes in England as well as English communities overseas. No less, the *Expansion* was an attempt to guide a public which, Seeley and many late-Victorian leaders believed, held increasing if premature command over foreign policy, just as Britain's position in a hyper-connected world was growing more precarious.[13]

What, then, of empire? With the *Expansion*, Seeley emerged as a prominent spokesman for the closer unity of metropolitan Britain with its settler colonies. His lectures on the 'diffusion of our race and the expansion of our state',[14] rather than those on the Raj, defined most contemporary responses to the work. Yet through it all, Seeley's achievement relied on a central dynamic not fully acknowledged by either contemporaries or subsequent critics. While a handful have recognized the *Expansion* as a specific, settlement- and race-oriented account of the empire, offering contrasting portraits of colonial and Indian components, they have only casually considered these two aspects and their significance in conjunction. This chapter contends that the *Expansion's* comparative structure was the very mechanism by which Seeley elevated the diasporic empire above and against the formal empire of conquest. The settler world emerged before a wide audience as a dynamic object for study, while despotic rule in a calcified Indian society sprawled, separately, as a historical anomaly in need of excusing. Meanwhile, other territories in which Britain claimed formal or informal predominance barely entered the margins. The dual structure and temporal motifs of the *Expansion*, so often taken for granted, were in fact integral to the book's wider impact.

Seeley wrote and published *The Expansion of England* to advocate for Greater Britain as a settler state revealing divine purpose in world affairs. Doing so required the redefinition of imperial politics, in which the rise of the diasporic colonies became the decisive fact of England's past, present,

and future. Consequently, Seeley consigned British India to a different and inferior past, and delimited imperial politics more generally to exclude recent realignments in Egypt and Southern Africa. Not least of all, the *Expansion*'s neglect of Ireland, corresponding with Seeley's deep antipathy toward Home Rule, inaugurated a mode of imperial history that attempted to negate internal constitutional dissent. In trying to steer historical practice away from the study of parliamentary institutions born from admittedly deep factional conflict, Seeley's account of Greater Britain reflected a vehement stance against any contemporary alteration to the union of Great Britain. Altogether, Seeley exalted an imagined polity linking the white populations of Canada, Australasia, the West Indies, and the African Cape to Britain. But he cordoned it off from the taint of despotic rule in India and the complicated realities—labor flows and competition, racial antagonism, porous trade networks, and defense requirements—which bound the wider empire.[15]

This careful exclusion, and this partitioning and weighing of settler colonies and Raj, force us to rethink Seeley's storied position as the modern founder of British imperial history, as well as his more recent designation as prototypical liberal imperial theorist. These are issues to which this chapter will return. To that end, this chapter will also consider how Seeley's *Expansion* corresponded or contrasted with the work of contemporaneous theorists of British India. Rather than emphasizing Seeley's position *vis à vis* fellow advocates of Greater Britain such as Goldwin Smith, as Bell has done, I put Seeley in conversation with other Cambridge-affiliated liberals who made their name as servants of the Raj, Alfred Lyall and Henry Sumner Maine. These figures disagreed with the Regius Professor about the historical dynamics of British expansion and the nature and prospects of rule over subject peoples, a divergence that forces us to confront the problem that liberal imperialism was not, after, all, a consistent project for writing the empire's past and designing its future. Even influential Liberal Party intellectuals who would break with the party over Irish Home Rule, becoming, 'Liberal Imperialists', fell out between themselves on either side of 1886 regarding the historical tendencies that governed Britain's position in Asia. This disagreement, revealed by literary comparison and private responses to Seeley's *Expansion*, marked the antecedent problem for future attempts to institutionalize imperial history, and presaged the shape of social, fiscal, and defense debates of the *fin-de-siècle* and Edwardian years.

Greater Britain Versus India: Origins, Difference, and Historical Time

Seeley proposed Greater Britain as a transoceanic nation characterized by shared institutions and civic reciprocity, all in opposition to the two main political modes he detected operating by the early 1880s. In tune with discontent brewing among Liberal intellectuals, Seeley denounced Disraelian bombast as well as Gladstonian populism, and a host of evils he saw plaguing public imperial politics—demagoguery, despotism, false patriotism, and commercialism.[16] Seeley gave his lectures six years after the British government purchased a large minority stake in the Suez Canal and Disraeli proclaimed Victoria Empress of India, and four years after Britain annexed the Transvaal. The *Expansion* appeared the year after the occupation of Egypt, in time to greet the Scramble for Africa, as metropolitan and overseas leaders alike sensed the unleashing of multiple democratic and imperial crises.[17] And yet, aside from a brief discussion of the Atlantic slave trade, the *Expansion* gave no mention of, let alone justification for, British activity in northern or tropical Africa. Moreover, Seeley excluded contemporary Ireland from his historical panorama. Such omissions were fundamental to Seeley's project of purifying public life. In ignoring Ireland and pushing Africa to the margins, Seeley defined the problem involved as at most peripheral to Britain's imperial trajectory.

British India commanded one half of the book, but Seeley kept it purposefully separate from the story of Greater Britain. Seeley's segregation of India, and the displacement of Ireland, Egypt, and Africa, defined the modes that he considered natural to imperial politics by means of contrast. The Celtic fringe—Scotland, Wales, and Ireland—had been subsumed within an English state that continued to grow, politically and racially homogeneous, across the world. Great Britain came about with effective Britannic union in the seventeenth century, and *Greater* Britain spread through continuous overseas movement.[18] The problem, as Seeley perceived it, was that this growth had come to be regarded as 'so simple… that it has scarcely any history'. Correcting this error—that famous 'absence of mind'—required Seeley to rewrite modern history so as to place 'the great English Exodus' atop the tide of world events. Seeley held up patterns of warfare in the long eighteenth century which gave rise to the English dominance in both Asia and America. That era, he proclaimed, revealed a profound design for mankind favoring settlement over conquest and organic states over political accidents. The colonial and Indian empires had

to be brought together in the chronology of the eighteenth century, before they could be differentiated and weighed by the late-Victorian public.

Seeley achieved this necessary separation in the *Expansion* through a framework that invoked historical difference and inferiority—in short, historical racism. This apparatus self-consciously replaced biological racism: 'what is called the conquest of India by the English can be explained without supposing the natives of India to be below other races, just as it does not force us to regard the English as superior to other races'.[19] Seeley's proviso sought to escape any taint of discredited race science and its 'bombastic' manifestations. Yet, it also dismissed waning narratives of intertwined pasts and universal progress.[20] It even eschewed the ongoing turn toward culturalism among liberal imperial theorists and practitioners such as Henry Maine and Alfred Lyall—thinkers whose work looms large later in this chapter. It 'was not the fault of the natives', Seeley explained, if, long conquered and divided across the subcontinent, they had no larger sense of state as family—had 'no patriotism but village-patriotism'.[21] In this sense, Seeley borrowed from but then rejected the celebrated legal and political theories of Maine, acknowledging 'native' modes of politics before denying their vitality and propensity for change or development.[22]

If the *Expansion*'s chief concern was closer union between England and its diasporic colonies, it relied on Seeley's success in distinguishing Greater Britain from British rule in India. 'Now modern English history breaks up into two grand problems, the problem of the colonies and the problem of India', Seeley lectured. But there should be no mistaking existence for immediacy. 'Either problem by itself is as much as any nation ever took in hand before. It seems really too much that both should fall on the same nation at the same time. Consider how distracting must be the effect upon the public mind of these two opposite questions'.[23] Epochal time proved key to dissolving this tangle. Seeley established in his introductory remarks that '[when] we inquire then into the Greater Britain of the future we ought to think much more of our Colonial than of our Indian Empire'. The actual lectures on India raised this premise to a pitched affirmation:

> The colonies and India are in opposite extremes. … In the colonies everything is brand-new…. They have no past and an unbounded future. Government and institutions are all ultra-English. … India is all past and, I may almost say, no future. What it will come to the wisest man is afraid to conjecture, but in the past it opens vistas into a fabulous antiquity. All the oldest religions, all the oldest customs, petrified as it were. No form of popular government as yet possible.[24]

These assertions of India's immobility and political backwardness emphasized not just a civilizational but a historical distance between the Indian Empire and the settler world. Antiquity and chronological disjuncture, rather than mere biological difference, entailed political exclusion and economic inequality. Moreover, Seeley's time regime did not incorporate here any certain element of progress. England's position seemed untenable: 'The same nation which reaches one hand towards the future of the globe and assumes the position of mediator between Europe and the New World, stretches the other hand towards the remotest past'. Or, as Seeley pronounced later, 'The dominion of England in India is rather the empire of the modern world over the medieval'.[25]

To prove that British India existed outside of useful historical time, and that no modern historical precedent united India with England, Seeley stripped even conquest narratives of their power and familiarity. While the French may have entertained commercial and military designs, with the British seeking to match or thwart French advances, India had more accurately conquered itself sometime in the distant past. Europeans encountered a country already laid prostrate by religious, racial, and linguistic division. Despite his famous, sarcastic reference to 'a fit of absence of mind' behind Greater British settler emigration, Seeley earnestly invoked just such a spasm as the genesis of British rule in India. 'Our acquisition of India was made blindly. Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally as the conquest of India'. Therefore, no modern historical precedent united India and England. 'All along we have been looking one way and moving another. In a case like this the chronological method of study is the worst that can be chosen. … The end of our Indian Empire is perhaps almost as much beyond calculation as the beginning of it. There is no analogy in history either for one or the other'.[26]

Out of this unhistorical past, the future of British India became even more uncertain. It was absurd to think of India as a nation, Seeley said; but should English rule ever produce fruit and nationalist sentiment begin to crystallize, at 'that moment we should recognize perforce the impossibility of retaining her'. So why keep up the game, in 1882? Seeley deferred to a higher power on that question. The spread of light was 'the greatest function any Government can ever be called upon to discharge': 'as time passes it rather appears that we are in the hands of a Providence which is greater than all statesmanship… that the Indian achievement of England as it is the strangest, may after all turn out to be the greatest, of all her

achievements'.[27] This was a sporting affirmation of Britain's current work in India, but it seemed cursory, even trite, compared to Seeley's lengthy ruminations on the chasm dividing the British world from Britain's Asian empire.

Overexpansion: Seeley Confronts India

What was arguably the most influential historical work of the nineteenth century thus struck a stark and adamant division between modern dynamism in the self-governing colonies and extra-historical torpor in India. A troubling fact remained, however: Seeley was under-qualified to publish his seemingly authoritative pronouncements about India, and he knew it. As he wrote to his publisher Macmillan in September 1882: 'As to your sending the MS to the Printer's at once, the proposal makes me nervous. I have not yet positively made up my mind to publish it at all.… I think I should like to get some Indian authority to read over the later lectures'.[28] Although the Indian material remained in the full-length edition, it was an item Seeley opted to shelve in the long run. In 1884, Seeley asked that Macmillan's cheap popular edition of the *Expansion* include only the material on the white colonies, and not India, telling Macmillan that Lord Rosebery and others were asking for a new edition: 'I notice that all these persons speak only of the first half of the book; they are thinking of the Colonies, not of India. And the Headmaster of Marlborough, telling me the other day that he had found the book produced a very rousing effect upon his boys, added expressly that he had not confused them with the Indian part'.[29] These suggestions struck a chord in Seeley, who lobbied on despite Macmillan's initial reluctance to compromise the sale of the original. A separate volume of extracts from the colonial portions of the *Expansion* appeared in 1887, intended to commemorate the previous year's Colonial Conference.[30]

While Seeley's convictions regarding nationality and the organic state may have inspired him to promote Britain's diasporic colonies, other factors, distant and local, conspired in the early 1880s compelling him to explain Indian history at length to both Cambridge undergraduates and the reading public, despite his lack of expertise. Seeley's major concern with Indian affairs was not the actual governance of India, but metropolitan public opinion and the effects of authoritarian rule in the subcontinent on the quality of political conduct in Britain. The *Expansion* reflected his fear, as it developed by the 1880s, that 'political somnambulism' and distraction

with foreign and imperial exploits had corrupted English public life. Nations, and especially democracies, he had argued in a recent essay, were liable to be swept up by events 'with their eyes shut':

> [T]hat is, not prepared by any kind of political education to see what is before them, or against what objects they may bruise themselves.… Where the government is in the hands of a class there are other dangers, but there is not this particular danger of public action being taken wholly without due knowledge or consideration.… But a state where the democracy is young and sanguine, and where no one is taught politics, is a somnambulist state.…[31]

The *Expansion*, in its turn, addressed the problem of democratic thought reform; Indian affairs were just such an 'object' against which the English nation was 'bruising' itself.

Such an intervention had deep roots. In 1865, Seeley had earned notoriety as the briefly anonymous author of *Ecce Homo*, a meditation on the 'speculative commonwealth of Christ' which concluded that, as man, Jesus had sought to establish a state whose laws and mores embodied the correct relation of mankind to God. Humans were to model their social behavior on Christ's plan, rationally interpreted.[32] Informed by his evangelical upbringing, attraction to Christian Socialism, and contentious relationship with positivism while teaching classics at King's College London, Seeley's goal was to prove the mutual compatibility of Christian theology with a science of politics.[33] Critics, however, perceived an assault on Christ's divinity, and Seeley despaired at his failure to bridge the gap between faith and science which threatened to derail English politics.[34] Yet the earnestness and ethical mission of Seeley's historical work gained at least one influential admirer. When Gladstone offered him the Cambridge Regius Professorship in 1869, Seeley replied, 'I believe there is no position in the world in which I could do so much good'.[35]

In the years leading up to the *Expansion*, Seeley was occupied with two other projects: his *Life of Stein*, and the completion of his essays on *Natural Religion*.[36] The first was a biography of an early-nineteenth-century Prussian statesman whom Seeley considered the individual embodiment of an 'austere, deliberate, nationalistic politics of discipline and education'.[37] In *Stein*, Seeley attempted to reach an audience he felt he could not sway through religious or ancient history. Meanwhile, alongside *Stein*, Seeley researched and wrote *Natural Religion*, a belated rejoinder to detractors of *Ecce Homo* that 'explored systematically the bases of belief and

the purposes of faith in a world in which the naturalistic impulse, the will to science was omnipresent'.[38] But Seeley was shy to air his baldest concerns yet again before obtuse critics and an easily bewildered public. 'Of course one would not like the book to be a failure', he told Macmillan's in the early stages of composing *Natural Religion*, 'but beyond that I really do not much care. The success of Ecce Homo was rather alarming than otherwise. If I knew any way in which I could prevent all weak or such heads from reading me, I would certainly adopt it'.[39] Instead, Seeley took up modern history as the means of locating the sacred as terrestrial—a 'political religion' relevant to the whole of national life, and less prone to abuse or apathy.

While Seeley finished *Stein* and tinkered with *Natural Religion*, his lectures on English history seemed to be taking a divergent direction. His first sketch on the subject was published in *Macmillan's* in 1882. On its face, 'The Expansion of England in the Eighteenth Century' was about neither religion nor science nor statesmanship, but about war. Domestic politics mattered little in the eighteenth century, Seeley insisted; the true meaning of history lay in a 'general tendency' toward conflict and territorial expansion.[40] Seeley's *bêtes noires* by this time were 'unscientific' historians such as Thomas Carlyle and T. B. Macaulay, who had confused the public with tales of political intrigue and, also in Carlyle's case, heroic militarism.[41] Seeley hoped to do better for both 'the majority of the working classes… childishly ignorant of the larger political questions' and the 'educated classes' among whom 'there is much less trustworthy and precise knowledge of political principles than is commonly supposed'.[42] The key to this dual offensive, in his 1882 essay, was to explain the military spectacles of the eighteenth century, and to distinguish just conflicts essential to national progress from accidental or misguided campaigns. While Seeley's writings in the 1860s and 1870s revealed a distinctly pacifistic streak, by the 1880s he could defend violence so long as it was necessary for the survival and welfare of nations, which made the nation visible as the state.[43]

By the time of his Cambridge lectures, Seeley could articulate settler expansion as the rationale for eighteenth-century warfare, which in turn revealed the moral orientation of human politics. However, his path to that conclusion was not immediate. Colonization did not dominate his early interpretation. In the first partial statement of his thesis, Seeley held forth that England and France fought over 'territorial expansion' in both America and Asia. But Seeley had yet to discern a more specific meaning from these massed patterns. In this first draft, the expansion of England ended without a moral.[44] Seeley continued to ruminate on the difference

between expansion in America and expansion in India, so as to establish the spread of the English diaspora as the supreme fact of modern history. The circuitous temporality he articulated in *Natural Religion* emerged as something of a touchstone—and with it, the spark for the fuller *Expansion*. The present was all crisis—the 'dissolution of states' and 'savage isolation' of secularity—but the scientific study of the past would 'adapt religion to the present age and restore it to its original character'. 'As [science] grasps human affairs with more confidence it begins to unravel the past and with the past the future…. History and prophecy belong together'.[45]

Some scholars contend that the ultimate end of Seeley's thought was to apply the principle of national unification on a global scale, and to anticipate the emergence of super-states which might someday combine in a world state in which even formerly primitive or ancient peoples might find realization.[46] If Seeley entertained these prospects, such a vision lay beyond the aims of the *Expansion* as revealed in Seeley's private papers, correspondence, and preceding works. While prophecy compelled collectively, Seeley believed philosophizing fell far past the abilities of the common man, and advised his audience of would-be political leaders accordingly. 'Public opinion is necessarily guided by a few large, plain simple ideas', and was 'liable to be bewildered when it is called on to enter into subtleties, draw nice distinctions, apply one set of principles and another set there. Such bewilderment our Indian Empire produces'. The attempt to rule India through 'a system founded on public opinion' had aroused unwholesome passions. These, too, were part of the situation Seeley deemed unprecedented in the history of the world; indeed they defined the dangers of mixing headlines and correct history.[47]

The English electorate required instruction. But Seeley, in his own words, was less than sanguine that the masses could form a 'rational opinion' about an empire of conquest. Contemporary events raised ominous signals. The election of 1880, in which loud disputes over Lord Lytton's forward policy in Afghanistan contributed to the downfall of the Conservative government, proved the incendiary potential of Indian affairs. Not least of all, as Seeley revised the *Expansion* for publication, controversy over the Ilbert Bill broke in both India and England. Anglo-Indian communities in Assam and Bengal thundered with racist vitriol against the introduction of legislation giving qualified native magistrates jurisdiction to try Europeans in criminal cases. The Indian government faced a daunting crisis of authority, and the 'White Mutiny' threatened briefly to upend

domestic politics.[48] In a time of seeming distractions ranging from economic depression, debates over the franchise, the rise of socialism, and Irish and Egyptian unrest, Seeley feared that loud reaction to Indian crises would drown out civic-minded voices in public affairs. His imperial history was a two-part regimen toward a more virtuous national life focused on Greater Britain and coolly detached from the fate of the Raj. Consequently, Seeley strove to convince his audience that India, rather than determining England's fate, had not tarnished it in any way. The most surprising fact of 'conquest' was 'not that it should have been made, but that it should have cost England no effort and no trouble'. 'Of all the unparalleled features which the English Empire in India presents, not one is so unique as the slightness of the machinery by which it is united to England and the slightness of its reaction upon England'.[49]

In short, the effect of the *Expansion* proved greater than the sum of its parts. By detaching Indian from colonial history, Seeley inured Greater Britain from the trials of authoritarian rule and overtly racialized conflict. Beyond providing these guideposts for public discussions of empire, Seeley's intervention was also a retort to 'anti-imperial' critics who insisted the closer political union of the settler colonies with Britain was impossible. As Seeley turned to imperial federation, he increasingly ran afoul of radical Liberals and self-professed colonial nationalists such as former Oxford Regius Professor of History and radical expatriate, Goldwin Smith. Smith argued that federation was impracticable given the natural growth of colonial separatism and the incompatible coexistent extremes of empire: parliamentary institutions in Canada and despotism in India. As early as 1857, Smith had been warning that attempts at imperial centralization would lead to despotism.[50] Therefore, the onus was on Seeley to distinguish the rationale for imperial federation from a crude celebration of empire in all its forms, a task he could only accomplish by addressing the Indian problem head-on. Indeed, Smith's most ungenerous critique, when he reviewed the *Expansion* in 1884, was to deny that Seeley had distinguished true imperialism from rule in India. Seeley could only shrug at this charge the year he became the president and founding member of the Cambridge branch of the Imperial Federation League, agreeing with Lord Rosebery that his book had fallen into the hands of an 'old wretch'.[51]

More immediately, internal controversies at Cambridge over the training of Indian Civil Service probationers and the purpose of Indian studies in the university churned around Seeley. In 1881, just before Seeley lectured to undergraduates on the expansion of England, the history and law

faculties weathered controversy over the appointment of a new Indian History lecturer. The candidate in question was Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Osborn, a former Indian Army officer and religious theorist highly critical of post-Mutiny government policy in India. The appointment led Henry Sumner Maine, then Master of Trinity Hall and former legal member for the Governor-General's council in India, to complain to Oscar Browning, Seeley's most outspoken supporter in the History Faculty. The new lecturer, Maine feared, represented a small and peculiar group who thought Britain's empire in India should be abandoned:

> … what greater harm could we do to the [entering] civilians than to tell them that the entire system which they have to apply is radically wrong and undeserving of their labour? It is much as though this university, having undertaken to educate some Irish students and propose to have them better instructed in Irish history (which, like Indian history, requires much solid and special knowledge), should select Parnell as Irish historical lecturer.[52]

Such were the questions which gripped Seeley's colleagues, and he replied over the next two terms in the series of lectures that became the *Expansion*. Those lectures were an act of careful positioning: qualified praise for the rulers of India but also an intellectual protest against Disraelian policies that had placed the affairs of the Raj and its new lifeline through Suez at the foot of Britain's untested democracy. While inviting his audience to contemplate Greater Britain,[53] he also told Cambridge undergraduates, and then the reading public, exactly how the entire Indian system could be wrong—the antithesis of a national and organic state—without condemning British leadership. India did not exist in the same political or moral space, or epoch, as Greater Britain. True imperial thinkers should not hold too tightly to the extra-historical Raj.

Seeley Versus the Administrators

Seeley's account nonetheless provoked disagreement between a version of the past that exiled non-white populations and made the Raj an aberration in British and Western history, and another that considered Britain's fortune and calling to be fundamentally defined by its relationship with so-called alien subjects. Among those thinkers seeking to justify and guide British rule in India, Alfred Lyall stood foremost among liberal Raj theorists whose vision of British Indian history clashed with Seeley's *Expansion*.

An influential administrator and religious writer by the 1870s, Lyall's scholarly volley came in his best-known work on the *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion of India* (1894), a dense factual survey of British rule which insisted that, far from being isolated or aberrational, British dominion in South Asia represented an essential fact of modern history.[54] 'One of my objects was to explain… that France never had any real chance of winning the prize of dominion in India', he told jurist and civil servant Courtenay Ilbert. 'The other object was, as you notice, to upset the miraculous theory, which has been adopted by others beside Seeley, by Spencer Walpole for example, in his History'.[55] Although Lyall never invoked Seeley by name in his text, he launched the volume by imploring readers to take a critical approach to scholars unduly caught up in local concerns: 'It is not… unnatural that historians, being mainly intent upon European affairs, should usually be satisfied with treating the foundation by an English trading company of a great Oriental empire as a marvelous and almost incomprehensible stroke of national good fortune'.[56]

Lyall and Seeley diverged over the fundamental lessons of British Indian history, revealing the stakes of ideological divides that have hitherto gone under-recognized in appraisals of late-nineteenth-century imperialism, and discussions of liberal imperialism in particular. Lyall argued, in broad contrast to Seeley, that the establishment of British rule on the subcontinent had been no product of haphazard scramble or mindless competition with the French, but the very logical result of dedicated commercial policy. Moreover, he banished Seeley's suggestion that England remained fundamentally untouched by Asia, emphasizing instead the 'influence and connexion of politics in Europe and Asia'. Rather than an extraneous liability, India represented 'an Asian dominion which is perhaps the most eminent and valuable legacy bequeathed to us by our forefathers in the eighteenth century'.[57] As Eric Stokes later judged, 'Here was an historical vision of magnificent sweep, which not only contained a theory as to the natural historical development of society in both East and West, but also linked the two areas by this theme of their perennial contest'.[58] Whereas Seeley wrote off British India as an aberration, Lyall held that British India represented the core of global historical development.

What Lyall and Seeley did share was the desire to win over the general reader to an informed view buttressing a specific imperial project. Undertaken at the request of the late publisher John Murray for the University Extension Manuals series, Lyall's *Rise and Expansion* sought to

distill essential historical trends behind British reforms in India for the general public through a 'short sketch' of the rise of British dominion in India, originally entitled *British Dominion in India*. Like Seeley's *Expansion*, it targeted a broad reading audience: 'to illustrate the working of general laws, and the development of principles', to combine 'scientific treatment with popularity' and 'simplicity with thoroughness'.[59] But again, this profession of straightforward pedagogy fronted a more ambitious project. Lyall sought wholehearted public support for and engagement with the work of the Raj. 'European progress is never likely to suffer another great repulse at the hands of Oriental reaction', he promised, and 'whatever may be the ultimate destiny of our Indian empire, we shall have conferred upon the Indians great and permanent benefits, and shall have left a good name for ourselves in history'.[60] Unlike Seeley, who framed his Indian conclusions in terms of guesswork and risk, Lyall promised a future —through a past—that linked Britain and Asia integrally and profitably.

The wider significance of Lyall's contribution also stemmed from his connection with the leading mid-Victorian theorist of British rule in India, jurist Henry Sumner Maine. Maine's *Ancient Law*, published in 1861, introduced the comparative method to English historical scholarship by arguing that civilized legal systems, distinguished by contract, had developed out of status-bound systems still prevalent in India. Lyall, in his affinity and intellectual debt to Maine, strove along these lines to instill in the British public a respect for what Stokes termed 'the strength of historical forces'. This concept might be explained more fully as the power of antiquity to impact the present, and for nodal encounters or events to bind together otherwise historically disparate polities. Both Maine and Lyall justified British rule in India through, not in spite of, the Indian village community which they claimed persisted into the present day as 'an Aryan institution surviving in full vigour', a comprehensible, if primitive, community which linked India and Britain through the longer global chain of human history.[61] Siding with Maine against Seeley, Lyall, in effect, brought into conversation two competing social scientific approaches to thinking about the components of the British empire and theorizing the chronological relationships they held with one another.[62] While Lyall and Maine advocated moderation in Indian reforms, with Lyall especially wary of an over-centralized state and the disruption of native religious cultures, both maintained that British rule could more fully unite British and Indian civilizations, requiring the involvement and support of the British public

along with the closest tending of the government and experts.[63] This vision of connection stood in stark contrast to Seeley's imperatives.

Further Limits of the *Expansion*

Seeley's concerted attempt to disentangle India from Greater Britain, at once halting and high-flown, contrasted tellingly with the great silence of his imperial history: Ireland. In the years surrounding pitched agitation over Irish affairs, Seeley combined his campaigning for imperial federation with active opposition to Home Rule. When the Home Rule crisis broke in 1886, Seeley led the charge in forming a Liberal Unionist committee at Cambridge and broke with Home Rulers, including his friend, historian Oscar Browning. As Seeley thundered, 'a Gladstonian Home Ruler is at the opposite pole from me! … My favourite notion of making politics a matter of teaching seems to me to suffer a humiliating reducto ad absurdum, when two men, who united in advocating are led by their historical studies to adopt views of politics so extremely opposite'.[64] Home Rule was the antithesis of Seeley's conception of the lessons of history; politics was not about ancient grudges or constitutional tinkering, in his view, but divining the higher purpose behind an expansive English state. The essence of Great Britain was fixed beyond revision. The same might someday be true, Seeley hoped, for Greater Britain.

Seeley's disdain for the Home Rule movement in Ireland, like his dismissal of nationalism in India, fundamentally informed his revision and recasting of British political history on a global scale. Seeley drew Ireland closer to the point of oblivion, excluding it from the imperial story because he believed the running conflict to be essentially a domestic concern rather than legitimate resistance within Greater Britain 'over the seas'. He did so in the *Expansion* through an interpretive twist that denied the prevailing constitutional mode for characterizing the growth of the English state. That genre, dominant since the ascent of Oxford's William Stubbs, valorized the evolution of representative institutions from early medieval times, with Stubbs's colleagues and heirs now tracing that 'perfect chain' of statutes past the revolution of 1688.[65] Seeley railed at length against 'confounding the history of England with the history of Parliament'. He was rather concerned with 'the simple, obvious fact of the extension of the English name into other countries of the globe'. Taking this extension as a fact, Seeley reiterated that 'history has to do with the State' and not individuals. Therefore, different moral poles prevailed. With the expansive

state as scientific subject, he argued: 'History does not show that conquests made lawlessly in one generation are certain or even likely to be lost again in another: and, as government is never to be confounded with property, it does not appear that states have always a right, much less that they are bound, to restore gains that may be more or less ill-begotten'.[66] In this way, Seeley divorced questions of expansion from the morality or methods of individual settler encounters, and excluded questions of constitution-making and Irish Home Rule because they indicated counterproductive sidetracks from the narrative he offered: that of a burgeoning world state and homogeneous community of race, language, religion, and sentiment.

In his later years, Seeley's opposition to Home Rule sharpened his previous opposition to constitutional innovation and any potentially 'revolutionary' reforms. As a founding figure behind the Cambridgeshire Liberal Unionists in 1886, Seeley through the end of his life protested 'this novel practice of trying reckless experiments with the Constitution' and 'that poison of revolutionary bitterness with which it is proposed to infect our political life':

> Is it statesmanship to press forward an innovation, which is not imposed upon us by any extreme need, in the face of opposition such as this? Shall we under pretence of propitiating Ireland defy the men of business and the Protestants of Ireland at the same time, and drive them to ask those questions concerning the limits of state authority and the right of resistance which are the most dangerous questions which can be raised in politics[?][67]

Seeley argued that, to that point, the work of Liberals toward electoral reform had been truly conservative by nature. 'We have seen in the last half century many changes in the constitution of the House of Commons, several extensions of the franchise. And yet they have left the House of Commons, and the whole political system which centres on it, substantially the same. The development has been regular and natural; it has not interrupted the prosperity and tranquility of the country; it has introduced no poison of lawlessness or revolution'. But now, by allowing an issue as incendiary as Home Rule to plague parliamentary life, the Government threatened the viability of Seeley's cherished Greater Britain. Nothing could justify 'our legislators submitting a great state and a world-empire to the chances of an untried experiment. The proposal puts our whole system of government into the crucible', threatening to '[drive] to desperation

multitudes of loyal and deserving citizens' such as Irish Protestants and British business holders in Ireland.[68] Home Rule threatened to reverse Seeley's entire definition of Greater Britain as an organic state which had grown as the living embodiment of British settler rights and loyalty. Only the betrayal of this bond by misguided reformers calling themselves 'statesmen' could reverse such growth. While England's past oppression of Ireland remained an unfortunate footnote, Seeley concluded, it could not distract from the more important goal: maintaining the inviolable union of the global English state which had its seat at Westminster.

Rethinking Seeley

This better understanding of Seeley's commitments and methods enables us to build a more compelling model of the clash between competing late-Victorian visions of the British empire, and the premises passed onward in both public and institutional forms. Again, generations of scholars have welcomed Seeley as a pivotal figure in, if not the very originator of, the field of British imperial history. The following sections consider the significance of this chapter's findings as they revise earlier conclusions, assumptions, and oversights.

Self-conscious disciplinary appraisals, spanning over a century, vary in the degree to which they have recognized the interpretive weight Seeley assigned to different parts of Britain's empire, and his studied ambivalence toward the Raj. H. A. L. Fisher, in 1895, mused that 'So far from losing itself in wonder at the growth of the Indian Empire, [the *Expansion*] goes about to dispel the miracle, and on the whole inclines to that deprecatory view of early Anglo-Indian enterprise'.[69] Three decades later, Peter Burroughs commented that for Seeley, as 'in the case of so many later imperial historians… India was placed in a category by itself and treated as an exception'.[70] Coming to her subject through intellectual biography rather than imperial history, Deborah Wormell conveyed relief in 1980 that, given his views about India, Seeley 'was untouched by the notion that imperialism might be a civilizing mission to "backward" races'.[71] More recent commentary has emphasized discrepancies between Seeley's treatment of settler colonialism and of British rule in India.[72] To Roger Louis, much of the impact of the *Expansion* even derives from the fact that Seeley 'faced squarely the central contradiction of the British empire: how could the British reconcile the despotism of the Indian Empire with the democracy enjoyed by the colonies of white settlers?'[73] Duncan Bell, on

the other hand, concludes that any such 'conjunction' merely signified the contradiction inherent in Victorian political thought: Seeley's views on India managed, 'in typical liberal fashion, to simultaneously advocate self-determination as an ethical ideal as well as despotism in Asia'—much in line with his attitude toward Ireland.[74]

A deeper problem emerges. How did a thinker whom previous scholars found 'untouched' by rule in India, later typify a 'liberal fashion' which embraced a mind-boggling contradiction: the coexistence of an empire of liberty with an empire of authoritarian rule? If, as John Darwin puts it, Seeley's emphasis on the settler colonies as an 'organic expression of Britain', and not 'part of the burdensome empire of rule, was the cogent expression of an emerging idea, not a sudden new insight',[75] it should be all the more remarkable that Seeley devoted half his lectures to India. Even Theodore Koditschek's more recent interpretation of the *Expansion* as a Unionist break in a liberal, imperial, historical tradition does not adequately explain why Seeley limited self-government in the 'super-state of the future' to Anglo-Saxons. 'In fact, there was no inherent reason for such a limitation', concludes Koditschek. The distinction resulted from mere 'inference' and 'lapses' in Seeley's thinking, and from 'a kind of unconscious racism, a visceral distaste for men of a different color, who could not be relegated to the status of evolutionary objects, but whom they did not like to recognize as fellow citizens similar to themselves'.[76]

Despite correctly identifying the *Expansion* as a break in a supposedly inclusive or universalizing liberal tradition, Koditschek, like Darwin and others, misses the novelty and aggressive revisionism of Seeley's account, as well as its inspiration and purpose. Seeley was not 'writing to *save* the Empire'; he was rewriting the empire. Seeley was not merely asking readers to question a 'contradiction' between self-government in the settler colonies and despotism in India,[77] but presenting them with a new manual for the conduct of politics in England, as well as Greater Britain, based on requirements that British India would never achieve in one or many lifetimes. The responsibilities of English and imperial citizenship took full shape only in relation to, and rejection of, the Indian empire. By 'rejection', I do not mean that Seeley counseled the immediate or actual withdrawal of British personnel from South Asia. Nonetheless, Seeley's India was a historical anomaly and a fundamentally precarious enterprise. Seeley counseled English and colonial readers to detach themselves from its fate, by explaining how they existed in an authentic, perfectible realm which was distant from the inorganic Raj. Battle, faction, conquest, liberty: these were

themes for misguided amateur chroniclers. 'Nation', on the other hand, should be the true subject of the historian, as highest form of communal organization, and the fate, Seeley insisted, that awaited England's favored diaspora.

Seeley matters to successive imperial historical scholarship because he first and publicly drew the empire to the heart of studying and debating British history and politics. He weighed formal territorial and political components of that empire against each other: settler colonies versus the Indian Raj; parliamentary self-government versus authoritarianism; diasporic permanence versus commercial caprice. And yet the contingencies of that intervention—Seeley's motives, reception, and impact—have gone largely unquestioned. This chapter has argued that Seeley wrote the *Expansion* to promote the colonies of settlement and quarantine the problems of the British Raj in a different historical space and political arena, so as to preserve, untainted and unquestioned, the ideal of loyal citizenship to a Great and Greater Britain. Similar concerns drove him to actively oppose Irish Home Rule from 1886 onward. He spent his final years pursuing the roots of English expansion through a study of 'the growth of British policy'. Here again he prioritized the development of the British state and settler empire, while still insisting that his work was a necessary corrective to the existing domination of 'Constitutional History' over the English mind. He surveyed the foreign and colonial policies of Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, and William III. Elizabeth, Seeley held, marked the break between medieval and modern systems in that she 'paved the way for union with Scotland, and launched us on the career of colonisation and oceanic trade'.[78] But cancer prevented Seeley from pursuing this arc past the reign of William. Neither India, nor Asia in general, made an appearance in that final book. Nor did Seeley, the great expositor of England's imperial past and future, leave any documented public statements on British activities in Egypt or Southern Africa—in hindsight, the policy questions that would most plague the policymakers of his generation and the next.

Seeley served as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge from 1869 until his death in 1895. Through the *Expansion*, he raised this flag for the historical study of the settler empire and burst forth as its celebrity spokesman in 1883, and endowed a rising generation with foundational aphorisms: how, in the words of Fisher, 'our Colonies are really an Expansion of the English State; how the revolt of the American Colonies was due to special circumstances, which do not apply to our present

Colonies, and how we have entered into an age in which it will be both expedient and possible to draw our Colonies closer to us'.[79] Of course, Fisher's conclusion was not universal. Critics such as Smith and John Morley had dismissed outright any prospect of 'artificial' centralization, further emphasizing the distinction between a British empire of dispersion and a 'Roman Empire, which shall be capable by means of fleets and armies of imposing its will upon the world'.[80] But in death, Seeley's legacy as visionary gelled in the outpouring of commemoration from other historians, Cambridge students, and the well-wishers. Memorialists and letter-writers treated Seeley's contribution as twofold: the revelation of Christ's earthly mission in *Ecce Homo*, and the similar unveiling of Britain's duty to the world in the *Expansion*. 'Twice he took the English speaking world by storm', wrote Fisher, 'once by a book on religion and once by a book on politics; and each book in its own sphere, may be held to mark an epoch in the education of the Anglo-Saxon race'.[81] H. F. Wilson, active in the Cambridge Apostles, reflected with a flourish:

> Twice it was given to Professor Seeley to stand forth before the world of cultured Englishmen, summoning them to a new point of view. In *Ecce Homo* it was his voice which formulated in a new way for us the political and social factors in the Gospel message. … In another sphere it was also given to Prof. Seeley to act the part of Bacon and be the herald of a new out-look for his day. He was in the front of those who discerned the true inwardness of England's endowment and special mission in the world.[82]

Some writers harnessed Seeley posthumously to imperial unity movements. Although the Imperial Federation League was by that point sputtering, others continued to gather momentum, such as 'the various Groups of Lecturers on National Unity now formed, and forming, at home and in the Colonies' with '[the] idea of bringing Imperial Federation—or National Unity, as some prefer to call it—before the working classes by an organised system of gratuitous lecturing'.[83] This movement, known at the time as 'Seeley's lecturers', was in fact the trace of an earlier and otherwise persistent plan. Cecil Rhodes, in his visits to England from South Africa around 1890, had drawn together a circle of confidants including W. T. Stead, Arthur Balfour, Albert Grey, Alfred Lyttelton, and other rising figures at the intersection of journalism, politics, finance, and education. Their early plans for the promotion of Anglo-Saxon unity focused on improving relations between America and Britain and securing Britain's

interests in volatile settler arenas such as Southern Africa, projects to be accomplished initially through a small cadre and then a wider network of sympathizers. In the latter vein, they contemplated the establishment of 'A College, under Professor Seeley, to be established to train people in the English-speaking idea'.[84] That institution never materialized, and it remains unclear from Seeley's papers whether he was ever even approached by Stead or the others. But its very suggestion indicates that Seeley, by the end of his life, had become emblematic of a certain way of thinking about Britain's empire and directing its future as a nominally homogeneous Anglo-Saxon polity.

Contemporary reminiscences, and these attempts to enlist a Seeleyan worldview on behalf of wider projects, reinforced the goals that Seeley himself had professed. It was essential to control the shape and content of historical and political ideas which would saturate the rest of British society, and to ensure that the received lessons of history would in turn promote 'the maintenance of an organic state' by raising 'a popular consciousness of national unity and the interdependence of classes'.[85] Seeley's commemorators dwelt on the *Expansion* as an anthem for diasporic empire. Yet they tended to gloss over its prolonged and somewhat tortured encounter with India. Although Fisher noticed that Seeley inclined to that somewhat 'deprecatory view', the underlying mechanism on which the *Expansion* turned went unremarked. The two-part structure, the fission of the empire, the elevation and propulsion of Greater Britain, and the exclusion and petrification of India—Seeley did this work, and subsequent generations worked with this model at hand. Few questioned Seeley's position on India, save Lyall. It would take nearly thirty years for historical theorists of the empire to suggest that Seeley, or anyone else, would have done better to include Indians or other subject populations alongside the settler colonies in their estimation of the imperial past.

Toward Imperial History

There remains one further problem with conventional wisdom regarding Seeley and the *Expansion*. For all his influence in the public realm of imperial theorizing, Seeley's contribution was not the concrete foundation of an actual discipline of imperial history in Britain that many scholars have assumed it to be. At his 1869 inaugural, Seeley vowed to campaign for the full recognition of history as an academic subject as it would illuminate the eternal laws of politics, and in 1873, he helped found the Cambridge

Historical Tripos. But in the longer term he created no lasting institution for expressly 'imperial' history beyond the pages of the *Expansion*. His campaign to merge political science with the history curriculum met a backlash in 1885; and matters swung even further during the tenure of Seeley's successor as Regius, Lord Acton, between 1895 and 1902.[86] Seeley's obsession with discovering a science of politics, to which history served only as illustration, remained an elusive and largely unpopular goal. During the debates over curriculum reform after Seeley's death, his friends proceeded with caution. Philosopher Henry Sidgwick wrote to Browning of 'the stepfatherly conduct of the [History] Board to Seeley's ideas' and how colleagues felt they had too long indulged the professor in his pet schemes for an 'inductive and historical' political science.[87] Economist Alfred Marshall went so far as to warn Browning: 'If I may give you a hint, it is that Seeley's name should be less frequently used', for mention would 'set peoples backs up…. They know Seeley's views; & don't want to hear so much of them'.[88] Seeley's compulsions had alienated even George Prothero, the rising Cambridge history tutor who edited Seeley's posthumous *Growth of British Policy* and went on to become the first Professor of Modern History at Edinburgh and President of the Royal Historical Society. '[D]iscussion at dinner at the Creightons', Prothero wrote in his diary in 1885, 'not very bright, for Seeley kills anything. … Federatn. meetg. in evg: Seeley presided, said too much abt himself & his 'Expansn of England'. Even after Seeley's death, Prothero recognized the risks of close association. '[I]n speaking of Seeley's attitude towards History, I endeavoured to state it as plainly as I could, without expressing approval or the reverse…. I do not altogether agree with Seeley, & yet I fancy that people here, if they think anything about it at all, would put me down as an extreme follower of his'.[89] While Seeley's emphasis on contemporary history echoed onward at Cambridge, his erstwhile colleagues soon distanced themselves from his methods.[90]

The transition from Seeley to Acton reflected a wider intellectual tension as the professional historical community continued to consolidate in late-nineteenth-century Britain. Seeley and Acton both were involved in the founding of the field's first journal, the *English Historical Review*, in 1886. At the same time, the Royal Historical Society turned its emphasis over the course of the 1880s and 1890s away from literary and social pursuits and increasingly toward questions of methodology, research infrastructure, and professional recognition.[91] In this wider milieu, Seeley's example and legacy

precipitated ongoing questions for academic colleagues and rivals, as well as politicians and public figures more broadly, about the ends to which historians conducted their work and the hallmarks of their craft.

The very disparity between Seeley and Acton, and their relation to historical scholarship beyond Cambridge, brought these concerns into stark relief. The agenda of the new Regius Professor emphasized the unity of modern history, the importance of criticism and disinterestedness, and the moral duty of the historian, opening up a vast realm beyond Seeley's inductive approach.[92] Far from selecting historical evidence based on the requirements of present politics, Acton promoted the widest possible study and collaboration on critical lines. This ambition took concrete shape in his plan for the monumental *Cambridge Modern History*, which Acton edited from 1895 until his death. But while Acton was widely renowned as the greatest mind of his generation, he nonetheless could befuddle audiences. 'I have read his inaugural, but cannot say I cd. make out much that he was driving at', wrote Prothero to Browning from Edinburgh.[93] Balliol-trained politician W. H. Asquith reflected after meeting Acton that 'His mind rather suggests to me a well-stored furniture repository: there are all sorts of things there, but somehow you can never find the thing you want'.[94] Seeley hammered at arguments to the point of monotony; Acton, in contrast, gave the past over to unending investigation.

Seeley and Acton did agree on one important point. Both rejected the evolution of representative institutions as the backbone of historical interpretation, a position which set them apart from the mainstream concerns of English historiography.[95] Seeley fixated on the state; Acton, on the power of ideas to transcend borders. Seeley wrote off parliamentary intrigue as 'a false scent' for historians oblivious to anything beyond the overgrown annals of constitutional development. Acton, for his part, was skeptical of the prevailing enthusiasm for a continuous national structuring that traced 'things back uninterruptedly, until we dimly descry the Declaration of Independence in the forests of Germany'.[96] Yet, despite their rejection of Whig constitutionalism, still both found themselves folded into twentieth-century accounts of 'whig' ideology. Later critics denounced Seeley and Acton, like their Oxford colleagues, as emissaries of 'the triumphalism, the judgmentalism, the presentism, the Protestantism' that defined the late-Victorian canon.[97]

As we will see, constitutionalism continued to dominate historical study in Britain despite Seeley and Acton's resistance. Why did they end up so misremembered, and why did constitutionalism dominate the historical

profession in spite of their interventions? Seeley and Acton, both born in 1834, were figureheads for a generation of historians that, while divided over methods and meaning, nonetheless sought to direct the realization of national and global destiny.[98] Acton offered a formula for professionalization along critical continental lines and departed from the exclusively documentary and proudly English model that William Stubbs had honed—despite its being adapted from German practice. Seeley, even posthumously, represented an approach which insistently fused academia and contemporary politics through the valorization of an essentially Anglo-Saxon Greater Britain.

But Stubbs did not go away. The next chapter looks at the wider spectrum of public intellectuals and political movements which fused constitutionalism with the study and advocacy of Greater Britain in the 1880s and 1890s. In doing so, it seeks to explain why constitutionalism gathered force as a historical ideology and how it intersected with the agenda of Seeley, one of its harshest critics. This confluence, it should be noted, came before the advent of any explicitly imperial or colonial history programs in Britain. On the latter count, admittedly, there were fits and starts. Institutionalized imperial history could have taken root in 1895, in the shape of a colonial lectureship-cum-memorial to Seeley at Cambridge. The Seeley memorial committee considered it. But Seeley's circle of supporters, most of them subscribers of the recently defunct Imperial Federation League, had neither the resources nor the clout within the university or their own faculty to push through a scheme even so modest as an essay prize.[99] Cambridge netted a library renamed after Seeley. Imperial history, as a discipline, would only emerge formally at Oxford in 1905, partially along Seeleyan, settler-oriented lines, but also out of new imperatives wrought by expansion and war in Southern Africa and the crisis of historical and political vision that was to divide Edwardian Britain.[100] The intervening two decades would reconfigure imperial politics, and the application of historical and related knowledge to policy would quicken the empire's internally fraught path.

The chapters that follow observe the development of historical practice and thought that ran parallel to, and were embedded in, a pronounced, if—to current narratives—peculiar, movement in modern British imperial politics: the conceptual separation, observed in intellectual life, public outreach, and policymaking, between self-governing settler colonies and the dependent empire. Workers in history, and related fields such as law and anthropology, promoted different parts of the empire as discrete and

non-contiguous objects of study and policy. They partitioned imperial populations from one another in time to compensate for, among other concerns, a seeming compression of space. This dualism would not go entirely uncontested as a framework for politics and policy, as Chaps. 5, 6 and 7 will discuss. But, thanks in no small part to Seeley and the figures we turn to next, twentieth-century debates over empire would necessarily confront these ways of imagining and structuring human difference.

Notes

1. This chapter elaborates on ideas first presented in Amanda Behm, 'Seeley's *Expansion* in Context', *Storia della Storiografia*, 61:1 (2012), 59–74.
2. J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883).
3. Three thousand copies disappeared from British stocks by December, with other shipments destined for the American market. Discussions of sales and translation are found in George Macmillan to J. R. Seeley, 6 December 1883 and Alfred Rambaud to Seeley, 1 [September] 1884, Seeley papers, MS903/1B/19 and MS903/1B/20, Senate House Library, University of London. The Prince of Wales and Lord Rosebery, in particular, conveyed their personal congratulations to Seeley. J. N. Dalton to J. R. Seeley, 19 June 1884, Seeley papers, MS903/1B/22; J. R. Seeley to Mary Seeley, 28 March 1885, Seeley papers, MS903/2A/1.
4. Deborah Wormell cites the figure at 80,000 within two years; John Darwin and Jonathan Parry extend the same figure across three years. Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 147; Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, Nationalism and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 342.
5. [J. R. Seeley], *Ecce Homo: a Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1865); J. R. Seeley, *The Life and Times of Stein, or, Germany and Prussia in the Napoleonic Age* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1878).
6. J. R. Seeley to W. E. Gladstone, 8 January [1868], Gladstone papers, MSS Add. 44414 f. 15, British Library, London; Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, esp. 8–9, 114–117.
7. H. A. L. Fisher, 'Sir John Seeley', *Fortnightly Review*, 60 (1896): 183.
8. While Fisher was not an imperial historian in the disciplinary sense, his 1895 obituary of Seeley became the most cited piece on the latter's

passing. Fisher would go on to serve as an elector for Britain's first chair of imperial history, an event to be examined in Chap. 3. Fisher, 'Sir John Seeley', 183.

9. A. P. Newton, *A Hundred Years of the British Empire* (London: Duckworth, 1940), 240.
10. Peter Burroughs, 'John Robert Seeley and British Imperial History', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1 (1972-73), 192. David Fieldhouse concurred in the opening lines of his 'Can Humpty-Dumpty be put together again? Imperial History in the 1980s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12:2 (January 1984), 9.
11. Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: the empire in British politics, c. 1880-1932* (London: Longman, 2000), x–xi; Wm. Roger Louis, 'Introduction' in Robin Winks, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. V: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3, 9–10. Thompson located the chronology for his account of imperialism as a political movement and ideology in Britain 'from the early 1880s, when J. R. Seeley published *The Expansion of England*, to the signing of the Ottawa tariff agreements in 1932'. These loose dates, he said, reflected a focus not on governments but on 'grass-roots political activism'.
12. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, 177–179; Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 151, 155.
13. Frank Turner offers a lucid discussion of the Victorian 'crisis of faith' and channeling of confessional energies into literary and scientific pursuits, and transfers and conflict between religion and science. Christopher Harvie's *Lights of Liberalism* remains a compelling study of the attempts of university liberals to direct the conduct of national politics in the mid-Victorian era. Finally, taken together, Jonathan Parry's work on Liberal responses to the Eastern Question and Michael Bentley's dissection of Lord Salisbury's thought, with its chariness of democratic pressures on foreign policy, reveal the wide currency of governing concerns linking education, electoral politics, and international affairs. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian intellectual life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. 3–37, 73–100 and 171–200; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-86* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism*, 323–386; Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World: Conservative Environments in Late-Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2001).
14. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 8.
15. For recent appraisals of these networks and processes, see Darwin, *The Empire Project*; Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and*

Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

16. J. R. Seeley, 'Political Somnambulism', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 43:253 (1880): 28–44; Peter Marshall, 'The Imperial Factor in Liberal Decline, 1880-85', *Perspectives of Empire: Essays presented to Gerald S. Graham*, eds. J. E. Flint and G. Williams (London: Longman, 1973) 134–146; Harvie, *Lights of Liberalism*.
17. 'What with Egypt, the Transvaal, & the franchise we shall not be upon a bed of roses when Parlt. meets'. Lord Northbrook to A. Lyall, 4 January 1884, Lyall papers, MSS Eur F132/60 ff. 21–24, Asian and African Studies, British Library, London.
18. Seeley, *Expansion*, 12.
19. Seeley, *Expansion*, 205–206.
20. Theodore Koditschek identifies Seeley, along with Joseph Chamberlain, as marking a Unionist break in Victorian liberal historical imaginings of the empire. I will engage Koditschek's treatment of Seeley more fully at the end of this chapter. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth-Century Visions of a Greater Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 334–340.
21. Seeley, *Expansion*, 205–206.
22. On Maine, see Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
23. Seeley, *Expansion*, 174–175.
24. Seeley, *Expansion*, 175–176.
25. Seeley, *Expansion*, 175–176, 244.
26. Seeley, *Expansion*, 179–180, 182–183, 193.
27. Seeley, *Expansion*, 227–228, 252–253.
28. Seeley to A. Macmillan, 6 September 1882, Macmillan Archives, Add. MS 55074, ff. 24–25.
29. Seeley to Macmillan, 20 December and 7 February [1894], Macmillan Archives, Add. MS 55074, ff. 43–44, 47–48.
30. J. R. Seeley, *Our Colonial Expansion: Extracts from* The Expansion of England (London: Macmillan & Co., 1887).
31. J. R. Seeley, 'Political Somnambulism', 28.
32. [Seeley], *Ecce Homo*.
33. Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow discuss Seeley's contribution to the nineteenth-century debates about the content of a 'science of politics', although Seeley's mediation between religion and science are better described by Wormell. Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century*

Intellectual History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 227–235; Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, esp. 177–178.

34. 'I cannot help remarking the blindness of religious people, who utterly unconscious of the almost hopeless alienation of the leaders of the new generation from Christianity take offence when anyone ventures to reason with unbelievers in the only language to which they will listen for a moment'. Seeley to Gladstone [autograph copy], [late 1866], Seeley papers, MS903/3A/1; Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, 19–32.
35. Seeley to Gladstone, 8 January [1868], MSS Add. 44414, f. 15, and Seeley to Gladstone, 14 September 1869, MSS Add. 44422, f. 33, Gladstone papers.
36. Seeley had written to Alexander Macmillan on 16 February 1877: 'I am bent on finishing my Life of Stein in two volumes, and shall be greatly disappointed if it is not finished by the end of July. Meanwhile I am beginning two courses of lectures on English History, which taken together cost me quite as much trouble as would make a book. Nat. Rel. is the third [project]'. Seeley to A. Macmillan, Macmillan Archives, Add. MS 55074, ff. 18–19; J. R. Seeley, 'Expansion of England in the Eighteenth Century', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 46:276, (1882): 456–465.
37. Reba Soffer, *Discipline and power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 94, Seeley, *The Life and Times of Stein*.
38. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 155.
39. Seeley to Macmillan, 7 July 1872, Macmillan Archives, Add. 55074, f. 8.
40. Seeley, 'The Expansion of England in the Eighteenth Century', 456.
41. Seeley to C. E. Maurice [copy], 8 April 1880, Seeley papers, MS903/1A/2.
42. Seeley, 'Political Somnambulism', 33–44.
43. As Duncan Bell points out, tension prevailed in Seeley's thought on war and nationalism, in that a uniquely destructive human practice seemed menacingly embedded in 'the progressive unfolding of history'. Duncan Bell, 'Unity and difference: John Robert Seeley and the political theology of international relations', *Review of International Studies*, 31:3, (July 2005): 562–564.
44. Seeley, 'The Expansion of England in the Eighteenth Century', 456, 461–462, 465.
45. J. R. Seeley, *Natural Religion* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), 233–235, 255–257.
46. Duncan Bell gestured in this direction, although without including India, in his discussion of 'J. R. Seeley and the 'World State''. Meanwhile, Teodoro Tagliaferri has made a much bolder claim for Seeley's global vision. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 108–113; Teodoro Tagliaferri,

'Legitimizing imperial authority: Greater Britain and India in the historical vision of John R. Seeley', *Storia della Storiografia*, 61 (2012), 75–91.

47. Seeley, *Expansion*, 175, 189–190.
48. Lord Lytton to A. Lyall, 7 November 1883, Lyall papers, MSS Eur. F132/57 ff. 77–84; Lord Northbrook to Lyall, 4 January 1884, Lyall papers, MSS Eur. F132/60 ff. 21–24; Marshall, 'The Imperial Factor in Liberal Decline, 1880-85', 138; Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c.1880-1922* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), 112–113.
49. Seeley, *Expansion*, 206, 247, 249.
50. [G. Smith], 'Imperialism', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 55:239 (May 1857), pp. 493–506.
51. Goldwin Smith, 'The Expansion of England', *Contemporary Review*, 45, (1884): 524–540.; J. R. Seeley to M. Seeley, 28 March 1885, Seeley papers, MS903/2A/1.
52. H. S. Maine to O. Browning, 21 September 1881, Browning papers, OB/1/1043, King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge.
53. The course of lectures were advertised to the university as 'Greater Britain' in autumn 1881. *Cambridge University Reporter* (4 October 1881):15.
54. Although Lyall did not name Seeley directly in the published text, Lyall's correspondence indicates his frustration with the *Expansion*. Eric Stokes has also commented on this tension, and the inspiration for Lyall's scholarly intervention, although without clarifying his sources. Eric T. Stokes, 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India', *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Philips, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 399–400.
55. Lyall to Ilbert, 31 January 1895, Ilbert papers, MSS Eur D594/16, ff. 115–117, African and Asian Studies, British Library, London.
56. A. C. Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (London: John Murray, 1894), 1.
57. A. C. Lyall, *British Dominion in India* (London: John Murray, 1892), 24–37, 48, 280–281.
58. Stokes, 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India', 399–400.
59. Lyall, *British Dominion in India*.
60. Lyall, *British Dominion in India*, 280–281.
61. Stokes, 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India', 391–393; Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*.
62. Although Seeley and Maine observed cordial terms at Cambridge, they fell on different sides of debates over Indian governance, as evidenced by Maine's protest against the Cambridge Indian lectureship appointee in 1881. George Prothero, then a young history tutor, documented dinners and social events jointly attended by Seeley and Maine, with frequent

reference to Seeley's notorious social ineptitude. G. W. Prothero, journal, 1883-86, Prothero papers, King's/PP/GWP/1/3, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

63. Stokes, 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India', 313–316.
64. J. A. Hort to Seeley, Seeley Papers, MS903/1B/18, Senate House Library, University of London; Seeley to O. Browning, 6 April 1887, Browning Papers, OB/1/1455/A.
65. 'I quite agree with you that the great danger of the History School at Oxford is its tendency to become too modern'. Mandell Creighton to E. A. Freeman, 2 November 1882, Papers of E. A. Freeman, MS Freeman FA1/7/120, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.
66. Seeley, *Expansion*, 6–7, 131.
67. The statement continued: 'We may have an abstract right to raise them, but this country is not France; it has not grown accustomed to violence and civil bloodshed; and the reason is that up to this time a spirit of moderation and of aversion to reckless change has rained among our politicians'. J. R. Seeley and C. W. Townley on behalf of the Liberal Unionist Association of Cambridgeshire, 'The Home Rule Bill', 27 March 1893. Papers of G. W. Prothero, PP.2/1/11, Royal Historical Society, London.
68. Seeley and Townley, 'The Home Rule Bill'.
69. Fisher, 'Sir John Seeley', 192.
70. Burroughs, 'John Robert Seeley and British Imperial History', 198.
71. Wormell's gratification at finding Seeley 'at least skeptical about the wisdom of conquest and the viability of rule over aliens' reflected the extent to which Seeley had been marked out as the founder of a field which, by 1980, largely defined imperialism as a process of formal domination over non-Britons. At the time Wormell wrote, 'imperialism' functioned as scholarly shorthand for an impulse toward territorial expansion and authoritarian rule over native populations; by proving an exception from this outlook, Seeley seemed to justify an uncommon appeal. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History*, 177. For the mid-twentieth-century fluctuations in the meaning of 'imperialism' that influenced the moment of Wormell's writing, see R. Koebner and H. D. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
72. Thompson, in fact, overshoots the mark by saying that 'India hardly came into [Seeley's] reckoning'. Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 18–19.
73. Louis, 'Introduction', 9–10.
74. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 152.
75. Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 147.
76. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 338–340.

77. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 340; Louis, 'Introduction', 9–10.
78. J. R. Seeley, *The Growth of British Policy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1895), 1–5.
79. Fisher, 'Sir John Seeley', *Fortnightly Review*, 1896.
80. John Morley, 'The Expansion of England', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 49:292 (1884), 258; Smith, 'The Expansion of England'.
81. Fisher, 'Sir John Seeley', 183.
82. A. C., 'The Late Professor Seeley', *Cambridge Review*, XVI:394 (31 January 1895), 160.
83. H. F. Wilson, 'Sir John Seeley and National Unity', *Cambridge Review*, XVI:399 (14 February 1895), 197; William C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles: 1820-1914: Liberalism, Imagination, and Friendship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 61.
84. Reginald Esher, *Journals and Letters of Reginald, Viscount Esher*, ed. Reginald Brett, vol. 1 (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watling, 1938), 149–150.
85. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, 119–121, 154.
86. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, 114–117.
87. Henry Sidgwick to Oscar Browning, 24 November 1895; Browning Papers, OB/1/1486/A.
88. Alfred Marshall to Oscar Browning, 19 January 1896, Browning Papers, OB/1/1062/C.
89. J. R. Seeley, *The Growth of British Policy*; Prothero journal, entries for 7 February–15 March 1885, Prothero Papers, King's/PP/GWP/1/3; Prothero to Browning, 27 November [1896], Browning Papers, OB 1321/A. Prothero journal entry for 7 February 1885 also quoted in Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History*, 8–9.
90. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 96.
91. R. A. Humphreys, *The Royal Historical Society, 1868-1968* (London, 1969), 26–28.
92. John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, 'Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History' in *Lectures on Modern History*, eds. John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence (London: Macmillan, 1907), 1–31.
93. Prothero to Browning, 27 November [1896].
94. W. H. Asquith to Violet Maxse, 12 September 1893, Violet Milner Papers, VM 31, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
95. Anthony Brundage and Richard A. Cosgrove, *The Great Tradition: Constitutional Identity in Britain and the United States, 1870-1960* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).
96. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 30; Acton, 'Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History', 1; Brundage and Cosgrove, *The Great Tradition*, 39.

97. Herbert Butterfield swept Seeley and Acton, along with handfuls of their generation, into his indictment of 'the Whig interpretation of history'. Michael Bentley, among others, has criticized Butterfield's lineup as overly capacious in its attack, even as it provided 'conventional wisdom' fit for a further 'two generations of English scholars'. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931); Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870-1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92–93.
98. Soffer arrives at this point, although she downplays conflicts in methods and message. *Discipline and Power,* 96–98.
99. J. R. Tanner to Oscar Browning, 31 May 1895, Browning papers, OB/1/607A.
100. See Chap. 4.

CHAPTER 3

Historical Racism Between Page and Practice, 1880–1900

'[N]ational greatness depends chiefly upon two types of great men; those who make national history, and those who interpret it'. A slight man, Canadian historian and college headmaster George R. Parkin, spoke these grand words in memory of John R. Seeley at Cambridge in 1895. '[T]he very vastness, the very complexity of the national life … the great place England has won in the world … have given a new importance and a new significance to that other class of great men, those who best interpret that history'.[1] Within a decade, Parkin would rise to prominence as the first Secretary of the newly founded Rhodes Trust, himself overseeing the programs that established colonial scholars as an exclusive and ideologically purposeful group at Oxford after 1902.[2] In 1895, though, Parkin was an aspiring imperial federationist and a colonial newly arrived in England, making an adopted home of the country he barely knew. As for Parkin's hero: twelve years had passed since the publication of the *Expansion*. The late Cambridge Regius Professor's appeals to his colleagues and the public—to found political knowledge and pursuits on the formal study of Britain's colonial history—had so far gone unheeded. Only in 1905 would colonial history take institutional form, and only then would its first practitioners hail Seeley as their founder. Yet all the while, a strange convergence was in progress. Despite Seeley's attempt to commandeer the English historical profession away from a morass of parliamentary records and civic charters, the study of the history of his cherished Greater Britain continued to meld with an intellectual fetish for constitutional evolution in the late nineteenth century.

A. Behm, *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion*,
Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-54850-4_3

Seeley's fixation on the state and the primacy of the present over the past had put him at odds with Stubbs and 'the clique', as Seeley called the Oxford school of constitutional history and its attempt to build an imposing new interpretive edifice from archival minutiae.[3] But no sniping from the fens could stop the advance of constitutionalism at Oxford and in the profession more widely. Stubbs's successor as Regius Professor, Edward Augustus Freeman, was also a medieval constitutional historian. The trend amplified in 1885 and 1886, when the Vinerian Professor of English Law, Balliol-trained legal scholar Albert Venn Dicey, published the enduringly influential *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, and as parliamentary debates over Ireland invoked constitutional historians and legal scholars such as Dicey and James Bryce to defend both Home Rule and Unionist positions, respectively.[4] In an era of reform and uncertainty, constitutional history provided a tight and tangled spool of evidence from which to unravel and deliberate the lines of national development. Not only did Seeley's obduracy fail to curb these trends; a rising generation soon deemed Seeley's approach, as it distilled all the complexities of the global past into a clear and simple formula for national-imperial greatness in the present, as not only compatible with but inseparable from constitutional history. Colonial history, when it did appear at Oxford in 1905, was to be animated by an enthusiasm for constitutions and parliamentary development that Seeley would have spurned. None at the time seemed to notice the incongruity; there were bigger battles to wage.

This chapter explains why constitutionalism merged with colonial politics in the 1880s and 1890s and how it suffused historical thinking about Britain's empire well before the subfield of colonial history took formal shape in 1905. Doctrinaire professionals and literary chroniclers alike devoted their scholarship and commentary to the cause of settler colonialism. Colonial leaders seeking to consolidate settler power through the exclusion of non-whites appealed to transatlantic constitutional scholarship for guidance. These trends stemmed largely from three major interventions which, falling between and beyond the verve of Seeley and the authority of Stubbs, propelled a vast intellectual turn to racialism and Anglo-Saxonism. E. A. Freeman zealously conflated politics with race in his reconstruction of the unbroken English constitutional past. J. A. Froude invoked the settler-heroic as a riposte to industrialism, democracy, and moral decline. Captivated by the brawls of postbellum American politics, James Bryce preached segregation as a palliative for racialized conflicts over labor and

migration that riddled the wider English-speaking world. These collected visions of political evolution and racial antagonism, in turn, influenced a wider cast of scholars, politicians, and journalists attempting to steer imperial Britain, albeit unsteadily, past the threshold of the twentieth century.

The career of George Parkin was a case in point, demonstrating that constitutionalism, Seeley's morally charged presentism, and a hardening faith in the racial contours of history could be combined to powerful effect. It spanned the period in which a burgeoning belief in the racial basis of human development on constitutional or political lines, and a commitment to supporting Anglo-Saxon or, more broadly, Teutonic settlement around the world, powerfully influenced historical thinking about the British Empire. Seeley's *Expansion* and the proliferation of Stubbs's constitutional histories defined the beginning of the period; Rhodes's posthumous monument to English-speaking 'manhood' closed it in 1902.[5] This chapter examines the major contours of those years. Constitutionalism had resonated in and beyond academic history after the mid-century, in part, because it mapped onto wider intellectual, 'scientific' attempts to respond to crises of imperial rule and to systematize human difference along racial and civilizational lines. This overarching project only grew in conviction, immediacy, and authority in the 1880s, to an extent but partially revealed by the works of Seeley and Stubbs.

The following sections will explain how the marriage between Seeleyan 'political science', constitutionalism, and racialism was consecrated by looking at the contributions of two other celebrated and controversial historians, E. A. Freeman and James Anthony Froude. Both Freeman and Froude exemplified the tight embrace between historical scholarship, exclusionary racialism, and settler-world politics in late-Victorian historical thought. In their lifetimes, they participated in public politics to a far greater extent than did Stubbs or, for all his late-life exertions, Seeley. Freeman and Froude traveled widely; they advised politicians and policy-makers; they were, in turn, ridiculed for meddling outside their purview. Both forged their adult outlooks amidst the ferment over Tractarianism at Oxford in the 1840s, and in their search for direction developed distinctive visions of the past. Froude, inspired by Thomas Carlyle, thundered praise for strong leaders and embraced authoritarianism and struggle as those themes defined England's national ascent. Freeman, meanwhile, was enraptured by evolutionary racial theory as it explained, to his mind, the growth processes of successful polities.[6] The two historians were also,

famously, each the other's bitter antagonist. Froude, to Freeman, was an irremediably unscientific, literary dilettante; Freeman, to Froude, a hate-filled pedant. By all accounts it was lucky that the one did not live to see the other become his successor in the Oxford Regius Chair.[7] Yet for all their personal animosity, the two heads of the Oxford history school post-Stubbs drew out one master theme from the past: the ascent, survival, and triumph of Anglo-Saxons. Together, they pushed the study of history, whether supposedly literary or scientific, toward racial triumphalism. Freeman united constitutionalism with aggressive racial theorizing. Froude, meanwhile, integrated contemporary concerns over overseas settlement, civic development, and racial conflict into a heroic master narrative of cyclical struggle.

A History Safe for Anglo-Saxons: E. A. Freeman's Racial Constitutionalism

Like Stubbs, Freeman saw the origins of English political wisdom and culture in local institutions going back to the first Germanic settlements. Unlike Stubbs, Freeman envisioned English history as a completely continuous unfolding of Teutonic civilization from the fifth century through the present, with no caesura or transformation in the eleventh century. In his most famous work, *The History of the Norman Conquest* (1867), Freeman argued that 'Englishmen before 1066 were the same people as Englishmen after 1066' and that any foreign infusion in 'race, laws, or the language' had been 'speedily absorbed in the preexisting mass'. Those three cornerstones of Englishness remained Teutonic without taint.[8] Also unlike Stubbs, Freeman was an overt controversialist. But while he launched frequently into haranguing reviews, his own pathological distaste for cities and public libraries meant he never set foot in the newly established Public Record Office or British Library, and his neglect of archival research cost him dearly in the eyes of the emerging historical community.[9] With Stubbs's move to the Bishopric of Chester in 1884, Gladstone appointed Freeman to the Oxford Regius Chair, hoping that Freeman's verve and visibility would spur historical study at the university. Instead, Freeman's reputation for spikiness and charlatanry drove away colleagues and students. He, in turn, was achingly disappointed by the cool institutional reception.

Yet, Freeman's frustrated tenure as Regius did not reflect his more enduring contributions to public life in the 1880s. Oxford students may have decided that Freeman was no Stubbs, but he retained significant

personal influence over legal scholars Bryce and Dicey.[10] Further, Freeman won influential followers among a wider sector of scholars and politicians eager to uncover the racial and evolutionary bases of legal and constitutional development in the United States and the wider Anglophone world. In 1881 and 1882, Freeman had toured the United States and been swept away by the success of his reception, especially among the emerging leaders of the American historical profession. Freeman's visit, and his sermonizing about the medieval Teutonic roots of English and American constitutions, inspired Herbert Baxter Adams to establish his famous graduate seminar at Johns Hopkins and inscribe Freeman's favorite dictum, that 'History is past politics, politics present history' on the classroom wall.[11]

Freeman's influence over American scholars 'lay in his coupling of race and democracy, his insistence on the Anglo-Saxon origins of and genius for self-government and his suggestion that racial exclusion was the precondition of a self-governing democracy'.[12] In turn, Freeman's visit to the United States hardened his confidence that the Anglo-Saxon race had perfected the balance between political centralization and individual initiative in the medieval era, but that this trajectory was alien to other European races and completely closed off to 'lesser breeds'.[13] The 'really queer thing', he reported back to England, 'is the niggers who swarm here. Are you sure that they are men? I find it hard to feel that they are men acting seriously: 'tis … easier to believe that they are big monkeys dressed up for a game'. To another correspondent he complained about a run-in with black railway workers:

> the freed nigger seems to have a fancy generally for making us feel our Aryan inferiority—I am sure 'twas a mistake… making them citizens. I feel a creep when I think that one of these great black apes may (in theory) be President. Surely treat your horse kindly; but don't make him Consul. I told a man here of my notions of citizenship, which were these:
>
> 1. Dutchmen, High and Low, at once.
>
> 2. Other Aryans in third generation.
>
> 3. Non-Aryans not at all.
>
> And I find many in their hearts say the same, though they make it a point of honour to let in everybody.[14]

Freeman's visceral aversion to colored traits veered swiftly into political vitriol, revealing the extent to which race defined the possibilities of

citizenship for this avowed radical and democrat. After all, by the 1880s, Freeman boasted a steady record of support for universal manhood suffrage and Irish devolution within the United Kingdom precisely because he saw the English constitution as a testament to the Teutonic bloodline. In an 1872 essay, *Growth of the English Constitution*, he argued that talk of rupture and revolution distracted most people from a profound truth: reform proved England true to 'the very earliest principles of our race …. [As] far at least as our race is concerned, freedom is everywhere older than bondage …. Our ancient history is the possession of the Liberal, who, as being ever ready to reform, is the true Conservative …'.[15]

Freeman's view that liberty and political dynamism could manifest only in 'Aryan nations' was no mere 'failure' caused by European provincialism, as some critics have argued, but a committed stance on imperial politics.[16] Like Seeley, Freeman actively sought to consolidate a racially exclusive field of knowledge and political engagement as a rejoinder to the uneasy coexistence of self-governing and despotic parts of the British Empire. But Freeman's very preoccupation with racial differentiation—brought to the fore by his wild revulsion when encountering a multiracial society—prevented him from achieving Seeley's clean separation between an authoritarian realm of the past and a self-governing province of the future.

Seeley perceived those two spaces as held together temporarily by British statesmanship. To Freeman, in comparison, the empire of the present appeared to be lurching along as a disastrous spectacle, its leaders too incompetent to disentangle global Anglo-Saxondom from different and more primitive populations. Freeman supported Home Rule for Ireland on the grounds that forced unity would never benefit two unlike and unequal peoples, and he passionately opposed the imperial federation movement, shrinking from any measures which supposedly might compromise racial autonomy in international affairs.[17] As he told James Bryce, 'I go in for the English folk all over the world, wherever they dwell and order white government, [but] not for this nuisance of a 'British empire' that is now always drummed into our ears'.[18] 'Greater Britain', 'Imperial Federation', 'Federation of the English-speaking peoples'—such shallow rhetoric, he believed, neglected reality. The bulk of the empire did not consist of English-speaking people; the bulk of English-speaking people did not form part of the empire.[19] If India were brought into a federation, 'what is to become of the white-skinned, European, Christian minority, outvoted as it must always be, by millions of dark-skinned Mussulmans [sic] and Hindoos who can hardly be reckoned among the English-speaking people[?]' he asked.[20]

Against these supposedly confused aims, the aging Freeman set out to save the English past and future from the polyglot, multiracial, politically inequitable steamroller that was Britain's late-Victorian empire. Freeman's defensive version of colonial history vehemently denied race mixing, or even meaningful coexistence. A true Greater Britain, unlike other colonial empires, never did and never would assimilate outside Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon bloodlines. The only slide in the direction of Spanish 'mingling' had occurred, culturally, amongst slaves in the ill-fated West Indies: 'the grotesque imitation of English ways where real assimilation is impossible'.[21] In the end, Freeman championed colonial initiative and racial self-preservation by singing the praises of America's revolutionary leaders. In 'working the dismemberment of the British Empire, they wrought, I say once more, the true Expansion of England, the enlargement of the bounds of the English folk, and of all that the English bears with it to all its newly settled homes'. Seeley's *Expansion of England* may have established the contrast between settler colonies, as English state, and the Indian empire, in 1883. And certainly, Seeley's framework for holistic imperial history aimed at promoting Anglo-Saxon political unity over problems of alien rule. But to Freeman, writing in 1886, Seeley had misled readers. The 'true Expansion of England' would come about as 'the independent homes of Englishmen' around the world carried out their own affairs 'bound by loyal reverence, and by no meaner bond, to the common parent of all', and bound to each other in a 'brotherhood' which admitted no foreign elements.[22]

J. A. Froude and the Settler Heroic

While Freeman railed against imperial federation, the figure who in many ways represented his foil, J. A. Froude, pronounced a separate verdict on the future of Greater Britain. Within six months of its publication in 1886, Froude's *Oceana, or, England and her Colonies* had outstripped Seeley's *Expansion* in short-term sales.[23] Neither Freeman nor Froude set out to write comprehensive or systematic histories of imperial expansion, as had Seeley. To intervene in imperial politics they relied instead on essays, journalism, and travelogues. For that matter, the two stood dramatically opposed in their theoretical and professional approaches to the past. Freeman was preoccupied with the evolving constitution; Froude, with a cyclical, anti-progressive vision of the past. Still, both emerged as champions of the global advance of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Freeman's racial

and constitutional approach to English history led him to denounce imperial federation, a move which in turn consolidated his separationist interpretation of the imperial past. Similarly, Froude published *Oceana* as a salvo in his longer campaign to reform colonial policy in favor of state-sponsored emigration, against accommodationist or assimilationist stances toward native or non-white elements on the ground. The result was a powerful statement in which the reconstitution of metropolitan relations with the settler world and heroic morality went hand in hand.

Like Seeley, Stubbs, and Freeman, Froude envisioned the interpretation of the past as a highly didactic pursuit, essential to guiding Britain through the religious, electoral, and political economic storms that marked the mid-century. But Froude diverged wildly from the emerging profession in his insistence that history was not and never could be approximated to a science. History would reveal the moral basis of human action as an art because scientific determinism precluded free will, which Froude saw as the necessary ingredient for moral advance. Therefore, as Froude saw it, all history was essentially a 'mythic' or conjectural guide to the present.[24] Froude's distinct vision of the past reflected his early involvement in religious controversy at Oxford in the 1840s. His youthful crisis of faith had left him deeply skeptical of narratives of progress, whether along the lines of humanity's emancipation from religious dogma, the spread of peace and affluence through industry and commerce, the march of democracy, or the natural evolution of races and civilizations.[25] Against theories of forward movement, Froude turned instead to a fundamentally cyclical vision of the past inspired by Thomas Carlyle, the radical-conservative literary giant who had enjoyed an elemental influence over British letters in the 1830s and 1840s.[26] Like Carlyle, Froude believed that the historical record proved civilization thrived only through the inspiration of strong leaders, but that individual societies were fated to decline as the dominant spiritual beliefs of any age calcified into dogma and convention in the next. Further, both emphasized the heroic personality as a way of resolving the balance between human action and cosmic meaning in explaining the past, and abhorred industrialism and commercialism.[27]

The notion of a heroic pattern in history connected Froude's early thought with his best-known historical work, *The History of England* (1858–1870), and his crusade for social regeneration through emigration from the 1870s onward. As early as 1854, reviewing Carlyle's *Past and Present*, he compared Britain's current predicament unfavorably against that of the post-Roman Europe. Compared to the fifth, he warned his

contemporaries, the outlook in the mid-nineteenth century was profoundly uncertain: 'there is no such stock unexhausted, from which the race can renew itself. It must work its own deliverance or perish'. But Froude was torn between Carlylean pessimism and a reformist spirit. 'Whatever vigour there may be in our unfranchised millions, we cannot look upon them, saturated as they have been with the lees and dregs of civilization, as a virgin soil from which the world can rise new-born as, sixteen-hundred years ago, it arose out of the races of Germany; and, on the other hand, the whole human race renews itself with every fresh generation which springs out of it'.[28] 'Deliverance' required a committed turn to settler colonialism.

Froude, more than Carlyle, believed that humans could intervene in cycles of decline and that past human experience, interpreted properly, could inspire the necessary scrutiny, self-criticism, and dedicated struggle to do so. To this end, Froude's historical scholarship targeted theories of progress and liberty which, he believed, had numbed the senses of a nation to the realities of its predicament and vital need for salvation. He devoted twelve volumes of his own *History of England* to rebutting T. B. Macaulay's grand narrative of moderation. Despite all the fascination Macaulay had inspired toward the Glorious Revolution of 1688,[29] Froude insisted that the history of the Tudor period yielded far richer and more enduring lessons for nineteenth-century Britain. The Tudor monarchs, he argued, shook a socially stagnant England from its complacency and turned a backward island into the world's most powerful empire—not, he emphasized, through consultative measures or faith in progress, but through ingenuity, ruthlessness, and a sturdy tolerance for bloodshed.[30]

Froude's celebration of necessary, even righteous, brutality appalled critics. His refusal to fit his archival findings into a 'scientific' paradigm celebrating political moderation and a linear trajectory toward liberty damned him to amateur status in the eyes of historians taking their cues from Stubbs.[31] But Froude's rejection was no mere misfortune; it marked a principled clash. '[As] we look back over history, we see times of change and progress alternating with other times when life and thought have settled into permanent forms', he had begun his *History of England*. Contemporaries—so Froude thought—were too confident and absorbed in a gospel of forward motion to perceive this pattern.[32] And, over the next two decades, Froude grew increasingly anxious that the nation, instead of harkening to his call for spiritual regeneration, was careening heedlessly into moral and physical degradation; and that a blithe enthusiasm for free

trade, commercialism, and industrialism was feeding festering urban overcrowding and dislocating poverty. In response, Froude campaigned for emigration and reformed colonial relations through extensive commentary and his own infamous tours of Southern Africa in 1874 and 1875.[33]

The most enduring monument to this effort was *Oceana*, Froude's bestselling travelogue and treatise published in 1886. *Oceana* invoked a worldwide commonwealth tied together historically 'by common blood, common interest and common pride in the great position which unity can secure' against what Froude saw as the imperial government's neglect and betrayal of colonists throughout the nineteenth century. Froude built his argument on the premise that the 'wealth of a nation depends in the long run upon the conditions mental and bodily of the people of whom it consists … a race of men sound in soul and limb can be bred and reared only in the exercise of plough and space, in the free air and sunshine … never amidst foul drains and smoke blacks and the eternal clank of machinery'. Settler colonialism, by 'opening up the face of the earth', offered a way out of this industrial hell, a service for which metropolitan Britons should be profoundly grateful.[34]

Yet, Froude believed, politicians in Britain continually had sacrificed the interests of kin overseas to the whims of domestic constituents and the ambitions of placemen. This mismanagement and blind adherence to *laissez-faire* doctrines after 1846 had produced centrifugal drift in colonial politics and the continued decline of Britain's industrial population. Further, proposed constitutional solutions were superfluous to the real needs of forty-five million British subjects at home and in the colonies who comprised 'a realized family which desires not to be divided'.[35] Only a central emigration scheme and a consistent policy of metropolitan support for colonists against the wider world could check the unfolding crisis. Echoing Carlyle's previous calls, Froude carried the resolution that the government should form a central emigration board at a meeting of the British and Colonial Emigration Society at Mansion House in January 1886. By that point, Lord Brabazon found it easy to persuade the scholar to join his National Association for Promoting State-directed Emigration and Colonization in the summer of 1886, despite Froude's earlier pessimism that such campaigns had 'no hope of success'.[36]

The ineptitude and inconsistency of the mother country with regard to 'native' issues remained a problem even more corrosive than the lack of central emigration planning. Here, Froude echoed Carlyle's, and his own, earlier fulminations about race relations in the West Indies and what both

saw as philanthropic delusions and the betrayal of the planter class.[37] With the spread of settler-native tensions, Froude saw the future of the British world at stake. Froude contrasted parliamentary pietism against the decisive, even heroic conduct of settlers: 'The colonists being on the spot, desired, and desire, to keep the natives under control; to form them into habits of industry, to compel them by fear to respect property and observe the laws'. This plain sense was lost, Froude believed, on metropolitan observers.

> The people at home in England, knowing nothing of the practical difficulties, and jealous for the reputation of their country, have obliged their ministers to step between the colonists and the natives: irritating the whites… and misleading the coloured races into acts of aggression or disobedience…. [W]e first protect these races in an independence which they have been unable to use wisely, and are then driven ourselves into wars with them by acts which they would have never committed if the colonists and they had been left to arrange their mutual relations alone.[38]

Despite a rejection of constitutionalism and evolutionism, Froude's verdict on recent colonial history led him to similar policy conclusions as those reached by Freeman. Ensuring good relations between Britain and the colonies required allowing settlers to decide the terms of their own 'native' relations: the freedom to exclude and persecute non-whites, indigenes, and immigrants, although not in so many words, in the name of 'practical difficulties' brought about by encounters between supposedly incommensurate civilizations.

The historical logic that brought Froude to this point in 1886 carried him through the end of his life. Froude returned to Oxford as Regius Professor in 1892 at the age of 74, forty-three years after the university had driven him away on religious grounds. He took up the chair left vacant by Freeman's death, to the quiet displeasure of Stubbs. Yet for all the disdain with which other Oxford historians regarded Froude, he quickly became a sensation, enthralling packed lecture halls with his relativistic and dramatic interpretation of history. Colleagues were puzzled, but as Reba Soffer aptly observes, 'Froude's reading of English history as spasmodic was [ultimately] compatible with [the more saleable concept of] a continuously evolving national history because Froude would not allow anything of value to disappear'.[39] Far from ignoring the most pressing moral and geopolitical questions of the day, Froude gave them emphatically mystical

expression, and in this sense charged them with superior meaning. 'I cannot teach a philosophy of history, because I have none of my own', he announced in his inaugural. 'I know nothing of, and I care nothing for, what are called the laws of development, evolution, or devolution, extension of constitutional privileges from reign to reign, to end in no one knows what. I see in history only a stage on which the drama of humanity is played by successive actors from age to age'.[40] Froude's drama, although inhospitable to social and economic plotlines, made ample room for moral transcendence—transcendence which, supposedly, came about through the uncompromising recognition of the hard facts of survival, and through heroism manifesting in violent conflict. Froude's interpretation carried none of Stubbs's moderation nor Freeman's evolutionary separatism, nor even Seeley's scientific pacifism. Still, like those competing approaches, it heightened the stakes of thinking historically about the colonial expansion. Moreover, it provided a powerful moral charge for segregationist mentalities then on the rise throughout the British settler world.

Settlerism in Late-Victorian Politics: The Strange Convergence of Freeman and Froude

Despite Froude's fluctuating professional reputation, *Oceana* had proved a runaway bestseller upon its appearance in 1886. And while Freeman, ever jealous of Froude, had stewed that same year over the fate of his own 'little book'—*Greater Britain and Greater Greece*, 'which nobody [in Britain] will take the trouble to answer or notice'—he could still claim other successes at home and across the Atlantic.[41] Taken together, the travels and campaigns of Freeman and Froude demonstrated that, despite their theoretical quarrels, historical approaches to questions of colonization and settlement were becoming increasingly relevant to a wide swath of scholars and policymakers. Audiences across the United States embraced Freeman's account of the Teutonic roots of the Anglo-Saxon race. On the same front, Freeman's Oxford acolyte, James Bryce, would carry the elder scholar's legacy forward into early-twentieth-century Anglo-American ideological exchange. Froude continued to stump for emigration reform from his pulpit as public sage and Regius Professor until 1894, and was celebrated after his death as an icon of his age.[42]

Whether approached 'scientifically' or as a matter of salvation, the question of a global Anglo-Saxon community and its supposed integrity

rose on the agenda of public-minded historians in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Seeley's *Expansion of England* had established a framework dividing the settler colonies from India in imperial affairs. His contemporaries carried the project further and injected their own dose of racialism—constitutional and evolutionary in Freeman's case, anti-liberal in Froude's—to powerful effect. These concerns took root in fertile soil. Settlerism and Anglo-Saxonism, as historical and moral ideologies, spoke to two generations of Britons wracked with worry over economic dislocation and strategic competition on national and worldwide scales. Duncan Bell has surveyed nineteenth-century British perceptions of relative decline as they 'spurred the development of a mosaic of schemes for colonial unity'.[43] Yet this correlation only begins to hint at the immediacy with which public intellectuals responded when they confronted crisis. Not only did they take up new campaigns; they reconfigured the very historical theories underlying the metropolitan embrace of settler colonialism from the 1870s through the 1890s. The colonial ideal became accessible to a vast spectrum of politicians and theorists in their efforts to resolve insecurities that persisted from the mid-century regarding social and evolutionary processes and the very nature of economic life. Disillusioned liberals and radical conservatives of the late nineteenth century, from Seeley to Joseph Chamberlain to Froude, took up committed advocacy for a cause that had engaged the very architects of Victorian liberalism four or five decades earlier, but which had lost coherence in the interim. The public deployment of their historical models, and their active engagement with settler colonial champions of immigration restriction and racial discrimination, enshrined and spurred on processes of division that were increasingly defining the politics of the British world.

Why did such a wide range of metropolitan thinkers articulate their support for, and center their worldviews around, settler colonialism as they sought to resolve the intellectual and material crises that shook Britain after the mid-century? For one thing, as James Belich highlights, the ideologies of emigrants themselves changed for good in the early nineteenth century. 'Settlerism' emerged around 1815 as 'a vague but powerful ideology of migration', converting emigration within the Anglo-world 'from an act of despair … to an act of hope…. It transferred a valued identity across oceans and mountains—not simply an identity as Britons or Americans, but as virtual metropolitans, full citizens of a first-world society'. Settlers took on new prestige as heroes and heroines of the frontier, and proudly forged ahead free of the shackles of class and inheritance that dogged metropolitan Britain.[44] Peter Cain sums it up: 'Frontiers that were once thought of as

distant hellholes for thieves and murderers were imaginatively transfigured into gardens of Eden'.[45] Yet this shift in migrant attitudes only foreshadowed the extent to which colonization came to be embraced as the lynchpin of history by metropolitan intellectuals later in the century. That sea change came about through the longer-term experience of economic and moral crisis, and a rising appetite for state intervention.

For all the talk of industrial growth by contemporaries and subsequent chroniclers, the mid-Victorian British economy experienced tremendous fluctuations. The severest slump, that of 1858, threw into question the optimistic outlook that had attended the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Over the course of the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, the entrepreneurial sector, far from expanding seamlessly, felt a squeeze on profits and responded in fits of wildly uneven production and intense competition. The global depression that began in the 1870s prompted many observers to complain that British exposure to and reliance on foreign consumer markets had put the nation in a precarious position. National unemployment ricocheted, with alarmingly high rates in 1858, 1862, 1867–1868, 1884–1887, and 1892–1894. Although jobless figures rose above ten percent for only two years during that period—1879 and 1886—and stayed above 7.5% for only one four-year period—1884–1887—those moments raised substantial alarm among onlookers. In 1883, slum conditions became the object of a highly visible press campaign, when W. T. Stead published Andrew Mearns's series on 'The bitter cry of outcast London'. The resulting public outcry revealed a marked change in debates about social conditions since the first half of the century. Where scrutiny used to fall on individual weakness and immorality —the 'pauperism' that Froude still liked to conjure—broader debate by the 1880s invoked the 'crowd' of unemployed slum-dwellers and a 'residual class', and called for 'scientific' means of investigating the problem.[46]

Economic, moral, and historical theorists lunged at the problem. As a result, the period between 1879 and 1886 produced forceful calls for national soul-searching and knowledge-based solutions. Commentators worried that the scramble for profits, and the simultaneous degradation and dearness of work, were corrupting morals on a national scale.[47] Froude was not alone in appealing to colonial reform, emigration, and a general return to a *terra britannica* as remedies for the national plight. Seeley, as we have seen, turned away from a 'United States of Europe' over the course of the 1870s and came out championing a global Anglo-Saxon state as the model for a science of politics which even, as he saw it, the working classes could embrace. Freeman, of course, professed to 'go in for the

English folk all over the world', his abhorrence for any combination of the words 'imperial' and 'federation' notwithstanding.[48] Their positions served as the ideological buttress to private campaigns which sprang up throughout the 1880s intent on pressuring the British government into the structured recruiting and distribution of emigrants to the settler colonies. By the 1880s, worldwide depression had hit colonial economies, driving down export prices, raising unemployment, and freezing development based on serviced debts. In response to the perceived decline in demand for labor, assisted emigration by Australian, New Zealander, and Canadian governments dropped off steeply in the 1880s and stayed low through the 1890s.[49] In Britain, a number of factors—the colonial slump, controversies over land reform, the conjoined fear and fascination that urban slums evoked in the middle and upper classes—prompted a surge of lobbying by metropolitan activists. The most vocal and organized campaigns emerged in mid-1883, antedating the publication of Seeley's *Expansion* by only a few months.[50]

In general, the British government showed little or no interest in directing emigration, and remained sensitive to arguments about population hemorrhage and the development of an overweening state.[51] Yet, as the public clamor for intervention increased, politicians responded with one notable sop. The Emigrants' Information Office (EIO) began operation in 1886, a by-product of the employment crisis of 1884 and 1885 and the resultant outcry of emigration societies. But the EIO was born an orphan. Public and parliamentary pressures had forced promises from leading ministers; no cabinet department wanted to take the new office under its roof. The EIO wound up nestling meekly within the Colonial Office's budget, its one-and-a-half employees hidden in even greater obscurity in private chambers off Whitehall. Its only function was to offer advice to prospective migrants, as it strove to avoid 'undercutting' the voluntary emigration sector, showing favoritism to certain colonies or subsidizing the colonial internal development.[52] The EIO, at least as far as the Treasury was concerned, was to be a grant-in-aid office and 'a stimulus to private effort and a supplement to the subscription of benevolent persons'. But as the EIO's chairman—Balliol graduate and rising Colonial Office star, Charles Prestwood Lucas—later observed, 'no such subscriptions were ever received, and it is difficult to [imagine by whom] they can ever have been contemplated'.[53] While professing to honor private initiative, the Colonial Office essentially brushed off the EIO before the latter even got off the ground.

Despite its relative handicap, the EIO reflected a none-too-negligible conviction that, even without firm state direction, planners might still influence national destiny through the production and distribution of knowledge. Where the government would not take the lead, Hugh Egerton, a minor Colonial Office servant and amateur historian educated at Corpus Christi, Oxford, devoted a decade under Lucas to producing annual handbooks on the Australasian and South African colonies and Canada. The impact of those publications proved difficult to measure, but Lucas, for one, saw a direct correlation. The EIO, he reflected ten years later, had been founded at a moment of 'unusual distress and want of employment: schemes of emigration were in the air …. [V]ery much less was known of the fields of emigration and of the facilities for reaching [the colonies] than is now the case'. But, since emigration was on the upswing again in the 1890s, it stood to reason that the 'knowledge which has since come has … been in great measure due to the Emigrants' Information Office'.[54] Lucas chose an apt moment to lobby for increased funding to the EIO. By 1896, Chamberlain, recently installed as Colonial Secretary, was eager to rejuvenate government connections with self-governing colonies, canvassing the possibilities of an imperial trade zone and coordinated emigration schemes despite his reservations about the latter a decade earlier.[55] Meanwhile, 'knowledge' remained a fraught commodity in the imperial Britain. In the absence of central direction, scholars and aspiring opinion-makers leapt forward with informational projects of their own. EIO handbooks for aspiring emigrants, in particular, consisted of advice on colonial climates, employment prospects, gender ratios, and settler-indigene relations. While they shied away from interpreting statistics, their summaries spoke to the material comforts of the colonies, infrastructure, and—in the bluntest terms—non-white immigration and the pressures it placed on the colonial labor market.[56]

Egerton and Lucas both sought outlets for synthesizing these concerns into coherent, accessible accounts of the British settler world. Egerton would leave the EIO in 1896 to write *A Short History of British Colonial Policy*, the book that later established his claim to the first chair of colonial and imperial history founded in Britain.[57] Although Lucas would stay in the Colonial Office until 1911, he balanced his duties as civil servant with editing the *Historical Geography of the British Colonies* series for Oxford's Clarendon Press. Lucas published the first work in the series in 1887, a year after the opening of the EIO, to give a 'connected account of the Colonies' and 'the geographical and historical reasons of their belonging to

England'.[58] More accurately, his *Introduction* offered a theory of colonization which, following Seeley, distinguished Australasia, Canada, and Southern Africa from India and other stations. 'Colony' implied 'voluntary abandonment' and settlement, and the eventual predominance of settlers over natives: 'An account then of the English colonies should properly include the United States, and exclude India and many other divisions of the empire'. Although he felt compelled to use the word 'colony' 'in its popular sense, as simply equivalent to any foreign possession, it is well to bear in mind the true meaning of the term, for it gives at once a clue to the real character of the various possessions, which compose what has been called Greater Britain'. By keeping the purest ideal of a 'colony' before readers, then, Lucas intended to highlight differences between the parts of the empire, and to demonstrate what blessings colonization, as the work of an enterprising, physically robust race, could bring to humanity.[59]

While Lucas, a Welshman, acknowledged that ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences defined the British Isles, he, like Freeman, believed that the 'the English-speaking race' specifically had won Britain's place in the world:

> Their chief mental qualities are independence and self-reliance; a dislike of extremes, whether in the natural or in the political or religious world; a love of law, order, and system; and a capacity for progress, for permanently if slowly widening in ideas. If any stock more than another has been given the mission to be 'fruitful and multiply, to replenish the earth and subdue it', history seems to tell that such has been the calling of the children of England.[60]

Lucas's analysis melded Freeman's 'scientific' enthusiasm for racial and constitutional evolution, in terms of 'mental qualities' and 'capacity for progress', with Froude's redemptive vision of 'mission' and 'calling'. Such were the lessons of history, penned from Balliol and the Colonial Office in 1887, which were just beginning their fateful career in academic and policymaking circles.

Subduing the Earth: Racial Discrimination and the Uses of History in the 1880s and 1890s

Whatever the English-speaking 'capacity for progress', such claims stood largely in relation to the supposed deficiencies, inabilities, or primitiveness of other groups. Throughout the nineteenth century, settler ideologies

increasingly slid into the malignant assumption of moral—and subsequently, legal—supremacy over displaced populations.[61] Moreover, the global depression of the 1870s and 1880s, and the resulting squeeze on colonial employment markets, led to a new and violent backlash against the indentured 'coloured' labor force already circulating throughout Britain's empire. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Southern Africa, sweeping campaigns emerged which sought to exclude, or strictly control the movements of, Indian, Chinese, and Southeast Asian workers. Economic crisis supercharged the development of doctrines which insisted on the legal, moral, and civilizational inferiority of non-whites, and which now presented the 'science' of difference as matter of survival or ruin for the Anglo-Saxon race.

This ideological hardening produced concrete legal and social measures across the British settler colonies from the 1880s onward. In Western Canada, Chinese and, later, Indian migrants drawn by a buoyant labor market and the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway received a hostile rebuff by local activists determined to maintain the 'Britishness' of British Columbia. Ottawa, despite initial reluctance to give into local demands for immigration control, succumbed and in 1885 introduced the first of several laws, this one instituting an entrance tax, intended to restrict 'Asiatic' entry into 'white' Canada. The period after 1881 saw similar exclusionary legislation passed, at intervals, in Australia and British Southern Africa. Increasingly, British policymakers and colonial leaders 'had to contend with a rising wave of urban working-class opposition to cheap Asian and Pacific Island labour, made more effective by representative government and popular (white) democracy'.[62] In New South Wales, the aggressive measures of 1888 eclipsed initial laws against Chinese immigration, instituting a poll tax, denying naturalization, and lowering immigrant-per-tonnage allowances. In the 1890s, Southern Africa became a flashpoint for exclusion. As soon as Natal attained self-government in 1893, its parliament instituted measures limiting the civil rights of non-whites, and then abolished their right to vote in parliamentary elections from 1895 onward. In 1897, the colony instituted new entrance restrictions in the form of a £25 property requirement and a highly arbitrary literacy test. Cape Colony, likewise, had instituted a literacy test and property qualifications in 1892.[63]

By the turn of the century, issues of immigration, labor, and race relations defined escalating debates about the nature and configuration of the British Empire from Vancouver and Sydney to London and Calcutta. Official British policy held that all imperial subjects, including Indians,

possessed the right to move freely throughout territories under the Union Jack. Pressure groups and increasingly vocal politicians in the settler colonies balked, insisting that the precedent of self-government allowed communities to police their own borders and control racial composition. Colonial agitation over questions of race and immigration precipitated a crisis of imperial mission. Rather than making a joint commitment to the rights of the individual subject and to the realization of self-government, metropolitan policymakers and thinkers found themselves on the defensive, caught by circumstance between those dueling ideals.[64]

By the time of the 1897 Colonial Conference, the problem of colonial racial exclusion stood alongside defense and trade as one of the most pressing issues in London's relations with the settler empire. And, as Joseph Chamberlain's negotiations with the collected Australian premiers proved, it was the most vehemently contested. As had been the case at the first conference ten years earlier, only heads of self-governing colonies were invited to London; neither India, the Caribbean crown colonies, nor African territories were represented. On the question of recent measures passed in the colonies restricting 'alien immigration', Chamberlain assured Australian delegates that the government was sympathetic to colonial aims at preventing an 'an influx' of non-whites, but asked them 'to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which makes no distinction in favour of, or against race or colour; and [that] to exclude, by reason of their race, all Her Majesty's Indian subjects, or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful … to have to sanction it'. To spare this discomfort, Chamberlain implored the premiers to address 'character' instead of 'colour' in restricting immigration: 'It is not because a man is of a different colour from ourselves that he is necessarily an undesirable immigrant, but it is because he is dirty, or he is immoral, or he is a pauper, or he has come other objection which can be defined in an Act of Parliament …'.[65] In these terms, Chamberlain sought to deracialize racial exclusion. Immigration restrictions required an alternative public rationale, and more importantly, one suited to constitutional methods that sustained the liberal 'traditions' which bound a fractured empire. Why not, Chamberlain suggested, adopt literacy tests in Australia similar to those just established in Natal?[66]

Chamberlain's appeal only exacerbated the divide. The Australian premiers responded, to a man, that 'colour' was the crux of their campaign and that no rhetoric about common imperial subjecthood could lessen their objection to Indian immigration. 'It is altogether too vital a point for

us to put on the question of education, or ignorance, or poverty', shot back New South Wales's George Reid. 'We cannot veil the issue in that way. We really feel in this legislation, situated as we are so near these hundreds of millions of coloured people, that we must set up at once a clear barrier against the invasion of coloured labour.…' Moreover, according to Reid and the others, it was ludicrous to talk of Indians being fellow British subjects, or even including them in Britannic polity as objects of a civilizing mission. '[A]lthough it may seem to those at a great distance from us and from them that our conduct is not quite in accordance with the most broad and enlightened principles of philanthropy', Reid admitted, 'we all know that circumstances sometimes raise issues in such a form that self-preservation has to be studied rather than abstract theory and sentiment'.[67] Charles Kingston, representing South Australia, invoked the pressures of public opinion: 'It seems to us that there is very little difference between a Chinaman and an Indian coolie as far as sentiment is concerned. What we do want is a white Australia [and what] we desire to keep out are the coloured races …'. The Tasmanian premier, Edward Braddon, spoke most bluntly of all. An English-born and -educated Anglo-Indian who later settled in Tasmania in 1878 at the age of 48, Braddon was, by 1897, the rambunctious elder statesman of regional politics. 'I may say, sir, from my own long experience in India, that I recognise that the Indians are the coloured aliens who more than any other we could desire to exclude', he declared.[68] When Chamberlain protested that imperial coordination had always been premised on inclusivity, the Australians threw down the gauntlet:

> *The Secretary of State.*] You must bear in mind that all our discussions have hitherto turned upon the desirability of some sort of preferential treatment of the Empire, recognising privileges to British subjects all over the world which we do not recognise in the case of foreigners, and coming as it does this undoubtedly would be a great inconsistency.
>
> *Sir John Forrest* [Premier of Western Australia].] We did not include Indians.
> *Mr. Kingston.*] Never.
>
> *Sir John Forrest.*] We never intended to include Indians.
> *Mr. Reid.*] No, ever.[69]

Colonial demands proved the nemesis of the British government's efforts to maintain the premise of equality under the crown. But, as Chamberlain's tactics revealed, the government was sympathetic to the

goals of Australian, South African, and Canadian politicians, and ready to meet their demands for excluding 'undesirable persons' so long as colonial communities, using law as their mouthpiece, 'would define them otherwise than by race and colour'.[70]

The British government, to save face, pressed colonial politicians and their constituents to find alternative—albeit capacious—legislative and constitutional means for defining the bounds of their polities against non-white immigration. Yet negotiations at the 1897 Colonial Conference also revealed the extent to which certain metropolitan leaders were committed to creating a vast Anglo-Saxon political front at the expense of the wider empire, even if not immediately as a Greater British super-state. In the same breath with which Chamberlain asked the Australian premiers to rewrite their exclusionary measures against 'coloured labour', he informed them that a federated Australia would reset the rules of engagement in imperial politics. While 'a resolution of a Conference of Premiers' seeking to exclude Indians would never stick, 'you cannot go behind the resolution of a Federal Council'. Federate, Chamberlain hinted, so that Britain and Australia might parley as equals.[71] Rather than seeking to avoid the creation of a self-consciously racial bloc that divided the British empire, Chamberlain pushed for constitutional measures that would validate that bloc's existence as an accomplished fact. Past promises and present hypocrisy would be swept under the rug by the constitutional march of the Britannic future.

And so it came to pass. In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia 'was inaugurated in an act of racial expulsion'.[72] The first parliament voted to expel from North Queensland several thousand Pacific Islanders who had been imported as sugar laborers in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Shortly thereafter—as Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine quip—Australia 'celebrated federation' with the Immigration Restriction Act, a measure which subjected prospective immigrants to a dictation test in any language chosen by the immigration officer. In practice, its framers intended it to prevent all future settlement of non-whites.[73] Expulsion and exclusion were, according to Australian Attorney-General and future Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, 'the necessary complement of a single policy—the policy of securing a 'White Australia''.[74] At the same time, the position of Indians and Asians in the South African colonies was deteriorating. Increasingly restrictive acts in Natal provoked mass protests from the 1890s spurred by Mohandas K. Gandhi. In spite of the swelling activism, British policymakers continued to uphold exclusionary colonial measures in matters of race and immigration through the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902,

and the debates over reconstruction and federation that followed the conflict.[75]

By 1900, history came full circle in colonial population politics. Throughout the 1890s, Australian, South African, and, to an extent, Canadian leaders turned to historical theories of constitutionalism and racialism as they sought precedents for their campaigns to restrict immigration and segregate whites and non-whites.[76] More specifically, they returned to Freeman, via James Bryce. Bryce was Freeman's Oxford protégé; where Freeman had encouraged Bryce to trace political and historical unity as a product of race, Bryce became increasingly preoccupied with the confrontation between white communities and non-white elements in the wider settler world, illustrated largely by the trials of the Reconstruction-era United States.[77] A fixture of the most influential Liberal and radical circles at mid-century, Bryce established by the 1880s a compelling profile as comparative constitutional theorist, historian, and politician. Further, his career was defined by a long intellectual engagement with the United States, culminating in his late-life appointment as ambassador to Washington in 1907. Bryce had taken up the cause of the North during British debates over the American Civil War, against the anti-democratic rhetoric of Conservative and upper-class supporters of the secessionist cause. This controversy, and ongoing electoral and social debates at home, precipitated *Essays on Reform and Questions for a Reformed Parliament* (1867), the famous collection of treatises authored by Bryce and fellow radicals and Oxford democrats such as Goldwin Smith and Dicey.[78] Bryce grew further engrossed in American politics during transatlantic voyages in 1870, 1881, and 1883. His resulting study, *The American Commonwealth* (1888), garnered an almost 'biblical authority' and secured Bryce's reputation as the most prominent European interpreter of American politics since de Tocqueville.[79]

Over the course of successive editions, Bryce developed *The American Commonwealth* more and more into a comparative manual for Anglo-Saxon communities trying to negotiate the 'negro problem'.[80] Bryce, like his radical contemporaries, sought to establish the social and historical parameters for a thriving democracy. His, and their, calls for electoral reform relied on seeking the natural and proper extent of voting rights. His visits to the postbellum United States, however, prompted new concerns about the crises besetting the world's most advanced political experiment. Among the calamities of reunion that Bryce surveyed—military governments, carpetbaggers, the Ku Klux Klan—the most unsettling,

he deemed, was 'the gift of suffrage to a negro population unfit for such a privilege, yet apparently capable of being protected in no other way'.[81] Describing blacks as 'unfit' in 1888, Bryce rehearsed an argument for political discrimination as an evolutionary check. Blacks were not sufficiently advanced for the requirements of democratic participation; friction in the reunited American polity exposed the supposed incongruity of their inclusion. Bryce expanded this case in the third edition of *The American Commonwealth* published in 1892–1893. New chapters, devoted to 'The South since the War' and 'The Present and Future of the Negro', claimed that the 'presence of seven millions of negroes' prevented the South from becoming 'the most promising part of the Union', and that the problem, fundamentally, was historical. 'History is a record of the progress towards civilization of races previously barbarous'.[82] But whereas 'that progress has in all previous cases been slow and gradual', the enfranchisement of American blacks presented a singular dilemma:

> Suddenly, even more suddenly than they were torn from Africa, they find themselves, not only freed, but made full citizens and active members of the most popular government the world has seen, treated as fit to bear an equal part in ruling, not themselves only, but also their recent masters. Rights which the agricultural labourers of England did not obtain till 1885 were in 1867 thrust upon these children of nature, whose highest form of pleasure had hitherto been to caper to the strains of a banjo.[83]

Political exclusion by other means, then—violence, intimidation—appeared to Bryce as, at best, a regrettable charivari, and at worst, the inevitable corruption of American democracy by the excesses of radical Reconstruction. 'The force and fraud which the whites have sued cannot be justified', he wrote in 1888, 'but he who has travelled the South and seen the ignorance of the negroes and the turpitude of the carpet-baggers whose profession it is to lead and "run" them, will admit some force in the excuses which the Southern Democrats give for their manipulation of election machinery'.[84] Without the fifteenth amendment, Bryce suggested, a multiracial America might have continued to develop along pacific, holistic lines. Blacks would have persisted in the South in their 'instinctive sense of subservience and dependence' without being forced to confront 'their legal equality and their inequality in every other respect'. The North, conversely, would never have been forced to admit its own distaste for the 'negro'.[85]

For all the woes of the present, Bryce believed that American society could revert to a pre-democratic, depoliticized model of racial coexistence. After all, 'Politics leave untouched large parts of the field of human life, even in the United States; and the political inferiority of the coloured race, since it is the result of their retarded intellectual development, seems in accord with nature'. To find a way out of this apparent quandary, Bryce advocated that new limits be placed on black voting rights by educational or property qualifications. The only other alternatives, he argued, were bringing in federal agents and troops to protect blacks at the polls, or entirely revoking the fifteenth amendment. Here, Bryce positioned American racial politics squarely in relation to questions of immigration, color, and citizenship in the wider British world. Conjuring the recent example of the 1892 Franchise and Ballot Act passed by Cape Colony, Bryce suggested, 'The advantages of such a method are obvious [by] its adoption in a British colony where the presence of a large coloured population has raised a problem not dissimilar to that we have been examining. … Of the three plans suggested, that which would reduce the negro vote by the imposition of an educational test will appear to the dispassionate observer the safest and the fairest'. It was the 'fairest', he continued, because it 'casts no slur upon the negro race as a race…'. Racial inequality, kept out of democratic politics, was not a political problem after all.[86] Indeed, à la Freeman, it was evolutionary: 'as the present differences between the African and the European are the product of thousands of years, during which one race was advancing in the temperate, and the other remaining stationary in the torrid zone, so centuries may pass before their relations as neighbours and fellow-citizens have been duly adjusted'.[87]

As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have shown, Bryce's main contemporary achievement was to raise awareness, worldwide, of 'the challenges posed to democracies by unprecedented racial encounters' and of 'the crisis in the history of the world' that had followed on mass migration and black emancipation and enfranchisement.[88] In a chapter asking 'How far American experience is available for Europe', Bryce concluded that the American example for manhood suffrage proved that Anglo-Saxon and assimilated groups could take up the vote, regardless of property qualifications, successfully; 'but in the hands of the negroes of the South, or the newly enfranchised immigrants of the greatest cities, a vote is a means of mischief'.[89] Similar, Bryce was fascinated by the position of the American states, with clear parallels to imperial federation debates in Britain. He gently chided the anti-federationist Freeman, among other commentators,

for being overawed by the American federal apparatus when, in reality, the whole system relied on the balance between the federal ideal and state self-government. In addition to their other powers, states served as the gatekeepers of national citizenship: 'A man gains active citizenship of the United States … only by becoming a citizen of some particular State'.[90] The destiny of the union, then, could be largely determined by the internal demographic policing of its component parts.

Bryce's sensitivity to the problem of political self-fashioning or, nominally, self-preservation within a federal or imperial system won him an earnest following among colonial politicians. John X. Merriman, the Liberal leader of Cape Colony, intensified his appeal for Bryce's thoughts on literacy tests in the American South and Southern Africa in 1892 by insisting, 'I should be very glad if I could impress upon you the importance and interest of the South African problem which does not consist … in a sort of faction fight between English and Dutch or in the development of more mines, but in the silent struggle that is going on between black and white along the whole line'.[91] Although a Californian, labor demagogue and anti-immigration campaigner Denis Kearney looked north when he corresponded with Bryce about *The American Commonwealth.* Kearney boasted that his movement had pioneered the fight against Chinese immigration: 'My next fight will be to get Canada to pass an anti-Chinese exclusion law. … While I may not be able to set the world afire, I am in hopes of living long enough to see the Asiatic hordes excluded from the Continent, from Cape Horn to Icy Cape'. Kearney hoped this information would induce Bryce to revise the dismissive portrait of 'Kearneyism' that appeared in the book's first edition.[92]

In the Australian case, Bryce roused the constitutional zeal of Victoria's Alfred Deakin when he brought page proofs of *The American Commonwealth* to their meeting in London during the 1887 Colonial Conference. Three years later, representing Victoria at the first convention on Australian federation, Deakin recommended Bryce's book to delegates as the key to 'what may prove to be the last new constitution of any Anglo-Saxon people'.[93] *The American Commonwealth* reinforced the deep affinity Deakin had developed for U.S. institutions, and new terms with which to analyze the national vitality he had perceived and so admired during his own American tour in 1885. It also spurred Deakin's ambition to create a federal Australia which would stand alongside Britain as an equal in the imperial community and, with the United States, lead the march of the Anglo-Saxon race: 'a transnational fraternity of white men as an

alternative to the hierarchical multi-racial empire'.[94] Both Deakin and Bryce emerged at a similar point by the end of the century. Deakin trumpeted the project of a 'White Australia' following federation in 1901. Meanwhile, Bryce took the opportunity in his 1902 Romanes Lecture at Oxford to ruminate on 'race-contact' as world historical crisis and ask what could be done to 'minimize the evils and reduce the friction which are incident to the contact of an Advanced and a Backward race'. Contact itself involved countless traumas, but what to do when a mixed population had already come into existence? Mechanisms for political segregation were essential, Bryce insisted; after all, referencing the American example, 'the general opinion of dispassionate men has come to deem the action taken in A. D. 1870 a mistake'.[95] The de-Reconstructed United States had become the model for a white Greater Britain.[96]

The Problem of Greater India

Seeley had insisted in the *Expansion of England* that, by relegating India to a different historical realm, 'what is called the conquest of India by the English can be explained without supposing the natives of India to be below other races, just as it does not force us to regard the English as superior to other races'. Bryce claimed, in comparing American disenfranchisement to exclusionary colonial statutes, that literacy tests '[cast] no slur upon the negro race as a race'; they simply admitted an objective civilizational lag.[97] Taken up in the service of Anglo-Saxon thriving, the pens of experts simultaneously discharged a flood of epistemic alternatives to biological racism in the late-Victorian empire. Yet, as historical segregation mapped onto political segregation in the settler world, satisfying the economic and avowedly biological racism of colonial constituencies, these rationales grew fundamentally entangled. The wider British Empire divided against itself. Directed from London and India, it had thrived in the nineteenth century thanks to the free flow of laboring populations as much as from free trade; yet the erection of barriers against Indian migration to the colonies increasingly pitted the Indian diaspora and the Government of India against white nationalism in the colonies from the 1890s onward.[98] Metropolitan understandings of the Indian past and future, in turn, suffered a crisis of direction commensurate with the unease that defined India's relations to the rest of the imperial system.

'I find myself incessantly meditating, at the top of these hills, upon the future of India; I can see but a very little way ahead', wrote Alfred Lyall,

then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces from Simla, to fellow Raj administrator and historian Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff in 1886.

> The people are beginning to clamour for 'institutions', [but whether] popular government can ever be naturalized in Asia … whether any civilization can take root… are questions which suggest a dismal doubt whether all that we see springing up round us may be of very ephemeral growth.… India may be after all considerably disappointed at discovering that the English can only offer her material comforts, and an improved kind of sensuous existence, as an excuse for having conquered her, ruined her religion, and generally disturbed her meditations.[99]

Where was India going, after all? What was the point of British government? Even Lyall—the spokesman of the school of thought that rejected Seeley and established an intentional and necessary link between Britain and the subcontinent—had his profound doubts. Lyall's history writing attempted to make sense of the past so as to divine the correct course of policy; yet controversy abounded, and in the face of a murky future, Lyall himself was conflicted. He had supported the Ilbert Bill and Lord Ripon's reforms on Liberal grounds, but fell out with Lord Lytton, the recently resigned viceroy, who chided him, 'In so far as the word "Liberal" is used only as the title of a Party [which] has grown historically out of certain conditions peculiar to English political style, it seems to me improbable to use the term rationally or creditably in the Administration of a Country in which no such conditions exist or can exist'. Lytton followed up shortly afterward: 'Have you read Seely's [sic] "Expansion of England"? I think it a very good book'.[100] While Lyall stood up against Lytton's dismissive bullying in 1883, he confessed elsewhere that he 'could not conscientiously give unreserved support to the Ilbert Bill; it is just one of those measures which, although the principle is right and should be maintained, have to be pushed forward quietly and gradually. The point to be gained is not worth a great flourish of trumpets and a pitched battle'.[101] Matters grew more complicated with the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Lyall's ruminations to Grant-Duff, quoted above, revealed the extent to which he increasingly struggled to envision the success of English political institutions on South Asian soil. He sought to resolve his own turmoil by mapping out a history that neither celebrated Whig constitutionalism nor relegated India to a distant past, but his conclusions remained tentative.

Indeed, despite his attempt to provide an alternative to Seeley's exclusionary framework, neither Lyall nor other interpreters of the Indian history offered a clear way out of the detached confusion that beset metropolitan engagement with South Asian affairs in the 1880s and 1890s. The one other 'great scholar-mandarin of the late-Victorian Raj', William Wilson Hunter, died after completing only two volumes, up to 1708, of what he had intended to be a five-volume history of British India.[102] Further, despite Hunter's high-profile work as India's director-general of statistics, mastermind of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, member of the executive council, and vice-chancellor of the University of Calcutta, his commentary lacked a clear message readers could take forward into the future. When his wife published a posthumous volume of essays in 1903, Hunter's one projection, 'Whither?', merely rhapsodized about the travails of Crown rule—'the difficulties of governing a united India are of our own making'—and outlined the unresolved issues of native representation awaiting at various levels of Raj and imperial government. In the meantime, the biggest problem was keeping public information in the hands of the rulers and protecting the British Indian past 'from the mercy of every common defamer'. 'An unrestricted native Press, apart from any willful misrepresentations or race hostility, will continue a growing embarrassment to the Government so long as Indian public opinion remains uninformed in respect of the present and uninstructed in regard to the past'. Writing pro-British histories—even going so far as rehabilitating the much-maligned Anglicism of James Mill—and peddling them widely to the ruled, might buy time to achieve a governing balance.[103] Historical whitewashing and benevolent despotism with no end in sight: this was Hunter's parting suggestion.

Hunter's domineering if placid vision did not resolve the wider qualms about the Indian future that haunted metropolitan observers less convinced of the permanence of the Raj—or transatlantic observers, in the case of Goldwin Smith. 'It is curious, in reading about this subject [India], to mark the almost total absence of attempts to forecast the end', Smith wrote to Grant-Duff from Toronto in 1901. 'Yet the Empire cannot go on forever'.[104] The early Indian nationalist movement had one answer: India would take its place as a self-governing nation within the British Empire alongside the other soon-to-be Dominions.[105] But this vision achieved only minor traction in Britain. Although working along a different agenda, George Curzon, viceroy from 1899 to 1905, complained of the sundering of India's marginalized and inferior status as imperial politics continued

down the road of exclusion. 'India cannot federate because she is a dependency and in the last resort is under the heel of Downing Street, often most unfeelingly and unscrupulously pressed down', he lectured Violet Cecil. 'We give her good government here and we toady the princes when they come to London …. But when the ordinary Indian finds himself proscribed and persecuted in South Africa, Australia, & other parts of the Empire, he does not quite see where the blessings of Imperial Citizenship come in'.[106] Curzon's efforts to enhance the authority of British rule in the subcontinent through administrative and political reform signified his attempt to answer the project of Greater Britain with that of a Greater India. It was to little avail: his quest for permanence, in which ceremony and invocations of romantic legacy clothed radical reformism, failed to rally much metropolitan support, a fact that drew no end of complaint from the intensely sensitive proconsul.[107]

As an academic field, moreover, Indian history grew increasingly isolated within Oxford and Cambridge, and cut off from a modern history largely preoccupied with English and constitutional subjects. The disjuncture at Oxford was particularly striking. The Indian Institute had been proposed in 1875 by the Boden Chair of Sanskrit, Monier Williams, and was operational if not physically complete by 1884. But William's pet project did little over the intervening years to improve the frozen state of Indian studies. The Institute itself suffered from the long estrangement between Williams and Oxford's more famous Sanskritist, Max Müller. Ten years after Williams's death, in 1909, Curzon, as Chancellor of the University, judged that the Institute was an ineffectual shell, its social, public, and intellectual functions alike having fallen into disuse. As a degree subject, championed by Williams within the Honour School of Oriental Studies, Indian Studies folded after just 13 years. A change in age limits had made it impossible for Indian Civil Service (ICS) probationers, the only demonstrated audience for the subject, to stay in Oxford longer than one year. Indian history, meanwhile, remained the purview of the History School and had never been officially connected with the Institute or Williams's program-building efforts. Readers of Indian History had lectured since 1864, although by statute, they could only teach the history of British rule and no earlier material.[108] Whatever sway Indian subjects held over Oxford audiences in late-nineteenth-century Oxford was due to the allure of the ICS, the links would-be civil servants perceived between classical precedents and contemporary British rule, and the fashionableness of Müller's scholarship.[109] As the boundaries of historical fields hardened,

and as the study of the past reinforced the Anglo-Saxonist, racially exclusionary agendas waxing throughout the British world, India's past and future grew more superfluous to a rising generation of Britons who themselves sought new means to 'set the world afire'.

Notes

1. Minutes, Sir John Seeley Memorial Meeting, Senate House, Cambridge University, 13 June [1895], Parkin 46, George R. Parkin Papers, National Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
2. These developments are discussed later in this chapter and at the opening of Chap. 4.
3. As Seeley wrote to Browning about negotiations to found the *English Historical Review*, 'I confess I think that [James] Bryce aims at getting the journal into the hands of the clique. The Oxford Press & Freeman (with his complete leisure & his energy) would soon make it a mere organ of the clique. No one wishes to exclude Freeman, but I think he must have nothing to do with the management. No one cares less than I do for Froude, but to begin by excluding him looks like beginning by an act of homage to Freeman'. Seeley to Browning, 17 March [1884], Browning papers, OB/1/1455/A.
4. A. V. Dicey, *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1885); Richard A. Cosgrove, *The Rule of Law: Albert Venn Dicey, Victorian Jurist* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 234, 305; Christopher Harvie, 'Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A. V. Dicey, and Ireland, 1880–1887', *English Historical Review*, 91:359 (April 1976), 298.
5. Cecil Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes, with Elucidatory Notes to Which Are Added Some Chapters Describing the Political and Religious Ideas of the Testator*, ed. W. T. Stead (London: 'Review of Reviews' Office, 1902), 23–27.
6. J. A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 12 vols. (London: Parker and Son and Longmans, Green and Co., 1856–1870); E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1870–1873) and *The Growth of the English Constitution from the Earliest Times* (London: Macmillan, and Co. 1872); Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, 2011), 151–205; 240–50; John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

7. Ian Hesketh, 'Diagnosing Froude's Disease: Boundary Work and the Discipline of History in Late-Victorian Britain', *History and Theory*, 47:3 (October 2008), 373–395; J. A. Froude, 'A Few Words on Mr. Freeman', *The Nineteenth Century*, 5:26 (April 1879), 618–637.
8. E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England: Its Causes and Its Results*, 1st edn., vol. 1 (Oxford, 1867), viii.
9. H. A. L. Fisher, 'Modern Historians and Their Methods', *Fortnightly Review*, 62 (December 1894), 805–806; Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford, 1994), 100; Frank Barlow, 'Freeman, Edward Augustus', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10146?docPos=10, 4 May 2015.
10. Dicey credited Freeman with inspiring the former's landmark work, as Freeman had first insisted on the difference between England's 'written law' and its 'conventional constitution', treating those topics to 'popular and effective exposition' for the first time. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, vi–vii.
11. C. J. W. Parker, 'The Failure of Liberal Racialism: the Racial Ideas of E. A. Freeman', *Historical Journal*, 24:4 (December 1981), 826; Marilyn Lake, '"Essentially Teutonic": E. A. Freeman, Liberal Race Historian. A Transnational Perspective' in Catherine Hall and Keith McClelland, eds., *Race, Nation and Empire: Making Histories, 1750 to the Present* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010), 63.
12. Christopher Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-1886* (London, 1976), 156; Lake, '"Essentially Teutonic"', 63.
13. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 241–250.
14. Freeman to Professor Dawkins, 15 October 1881 and Freeman to Reverend Pinder, 6 November 1881 in W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of E. A. Freeman*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), 234, 236–337. Partially quoted in Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 248–49 and discussed in Lake, '"Essentially Teutonic"', 57–70.
15. Freeman, *The Growth of the English Constitution*, viii. Quoted in Parker, 'The Failure of Liberal Racialism', 832.
16. Parker suggests that 'Freeman's world was a European world not an imperial one'. 'The Failure of Liberal Racialism', 827.
17. W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of E. A. Freeman*, vol. 2, 292–293.
18. E. A. Freeman to James Bryce, 16 January 1887, MS Bryce 8–9, ff. 1–4, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

19. E. A. Freeman, 'Imperial Federation', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 51:306 (April 1885), 430; E. A. Freeman, *Greater Greece and Greater Britain, and, George Washington the Expander of England* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), 47.
20. Freeman, 'Imperial Federation', 50.
21. Freeman, 'Imperial Federation', 9.
22. Freeman, 'Imperial Federation', 88, 102–103.
23. Seeley's Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge, UK, 1980), 154.
24. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 103–104.
25. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, esp. 152–160.
26. Froude would later become Carlyle's biographer, his reflections precipitating storm of acclaim and criticism when it appeared in 1884. Waldo H. Dunn, *Froude and Carlyle: a Study of the Froude-Carlyle Controversy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931).
27. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: J. Fraser, 1841).
28. [J. A. Froude], 'History: Its Use and Meaning', *Westminster Review* 62:122 (October 1854), 446–448.
29. T. B. Macaulay's bestselling *History of England from the Accession of James II*, 5 vols. (London, 1848–1861) identified 1688–1689 as 'a preserving revolution', the capstone to a longer national narrative of moderation, innovation, and accommodation which, supposedly, warded against the revolutionary fates of other European governments in the nineteenth century. For a current critique of Macaulay and the generations of scholarship that have responded to his *History of England*, see Steve Pincus, *1688: the First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 11–29.
30. Froude, *The History of England*, 12 vols.; Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 232; [Goldwin Smith], 'Froude's *King Henry VIII*', *Edinburgh Review*, 108:219 (July 1858), 206–252 and 'Mr. Froude's Reply to the *Edinburgh Review*', 108:220 (October 1858), 586–594.
31. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 103–104; Hesketh, 'Diagnosing Froude's Disease', 378–384.
32. Froude, *History of England*, vol. 1, 1–2, Burrow, *A Liberal Descent.*
33. J. A. Froude, 'England and her Colonies', *Fraser's magazine*, 1:1 (January 1870), 1–16; Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 281; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2007), 144.
34. J. A. Froude, *Oceana, or, England and Her Colonies* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1886), 7–8, 11–15.

35. Froude, *Oceana,* 330–341.
36. *Times*, 27 January 1886; Howard Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palo Alto: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1979), 96–97, 215, 221.
37. Thomas Carlyle, 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 40 (February 1849). Froude reiterated Carlyle's condemnations in *The English in the West Indies, or, the Bow of Ulysses* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888).
38. Froude, *Oceana*, 4–5,
39. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 102–103. Soffer also accurately distils Froude's approach as 'relativistic, moralistic, and dramatic'.
40. J. A. Froude, 'Inaugural Lecture', *Longman's Magazine*, 21:122 (December 1892), 162.
41. E. A. Freeman to James Bryce, 16 December 1886 in Stephens, *The Life and Letters of E. A. Freeman*, vol. 2, 356–357.
42. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 231–235.
43. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 37.
44. James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 164–165.
45. Peter J. Cain, 'The Economies and Ideologies of Anglo-American Settlerism, 1780-1939', *Victorian Studies*, 53:1 (Autumn 2010), 103.
46. Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social history of Britain, 1851-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 169; K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 81; Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 85–86.
47. Froude, *Oceana*; Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare*, 169. Daunton cites Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1875) as another pointed indictment of industrialism, profiteering, and corruption.
48. J. R. Seeley, 'United States of Europe', *Macmillan's Magazine* 23:107 (March 1871), 436–448, 'Political Somnambulism', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 43:253 (1880): 28–44, and *Expansion of England*, 1–19; Freeman to Bryce, 16 January 1887.
49. Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 81–82.
50. Those lobbies were the Central Emigration Society and the National Association for Promoting State-directed Emigration and Colonization. Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 85–97.
51. Previously, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission (CLEC), founded in 1840, helped over 340,000 laborers and domestic servants migrate overseas, mainly to Australia and New Zealand. The CLEC's work

fell off dramatically after 1850, although the body remained operational until 1869. Through the 1870s and 1880s, ministers promised the resolution of domestic economic problems through party political reform. Although he would change his mind within a decade, Joseph Chamberlain turned a 'cold shoulder' to state-sponsored emigration projects in the 1880s because, as he told audiences, he expected that radical reforms in domestic land law and taxation, if achieved, would enable laborers to find work in England 'without expatriating them against their will'. Gary Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914* (Cambridge, UK, 2010), 72–73; Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 291; Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 94, 164, 219. Malchow quotes Joseph Chamberlain, speech at Ipswich, 14 January 1885 in Charles. W. Boyd (ed.), *Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches*, vol. 1 (London 1914), 143.

52. Magee and Thompson, 72–73; 'Report of Committee of Inquiry into the Working of the Emigrants' Information Office', 16 April 1896, Colonial Office files, CO 885/6/25, National Archives, Kew, UK.
53. C. P. Lucas, 'Letter from the Chairman of the Committee Covering a Report on the Working of the Office', 6 May 1896, Colonial Office files, CO 885/6/26.
54. Lucas, 'Letter from the Chairman'.
55. Despite indifference to emigration campaigns a decade earlier, Chamberlain supported Lucas's EIO initiatives against the belt-tightening of the Treasury in 1896. Chamberlain's perspective shifted in favor of increased colonial involvement as Liberal politics ran aground on Home Rule in 1886, and he himself transitioned to the leadership of the Colonial Office in 1895. C. P. Lucas, 'Memorandum on Emigrants' Information Office', 14 November 1896, Colonial Office files, CO 885/6/28; Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 164.
56. E.g., [H. E. Egerton, ed.], *Emigrants' Information Office Handbook, 1888* (London: HMSO, April 1888).
57. See Chap. 4.
58. C. P. Lucas, *Introduction to a Historical Geography of the British Colonies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), v.
59. Lucas, *Introduction to a Historical Geography of the British Colonies*, 2–27.
60. Lucas, *Introduction to a Historical Geography of the British Colonies.*
61. Cain, 'The Economies and Ideologies of Anglo-American Settlerism', 103; Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Patricia Grimshaw, Robert Reynolds, and Shurlee Swain, 'The Paradox of "Ultra-Democratic" Government: Indigenous Civil Rights in Nineteenth Century New Zealand, Canada and Australia' in *Law, History, Colonialism: The Reach of Empire*, eds. Diane

Kirkby and Catharine Coleborne (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 78–90.

62. Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 31, 82–83, 171–714.
63. Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 156–170.
64. Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 168.
65. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M. P. (Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies) and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies of the Empire … September 1897', Colonial Office files, CO 885/6/30, National Archives, Kew, UK.
66. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M. P. (Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies) and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies'.
67. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M. P. (Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies) and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies'.
68. Scott Bennett, 'Braddon, Sir Edward Nicholas Coventry (1829–1904)', *Australian Dictionary of National Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/braddon-sir-edward-nicholas-coventry-5330, accessed 14 May 2014; 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain … and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies of the Empire'.
69. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain … and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies of the Empire'.
70. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain … and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies'.
71. 'Report of a Conference between the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain … and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies'.
72. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 137.
73. Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 61; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 137–138.
74. Speech in House of Representatives, 12 September 1901, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 1 (Canberra, 1902), 4806. Quoted in Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 137.
75. Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902–1910', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (Spring 1997), 53–85.
76. The present section considers Australian, South African, and some Canadian affinities for constitutionalism, via Bryce. One exception stands

out: New Zealand's William Pember Reeves, agent-general and then high commissioner in London between 1895 and 1908, a Fabian and radical legislator. As P. G. McHugh argues, Reeves celebrated the state and empire as machinery for ensuring 'collective and civilized social justice, not as sacred relics of a mythologized past. There was no Whiggism in his history …. Nonetheless, he believed in historical destiny, as well as racial ascendancy'. McHugh, 'William Pember Reeves (1857–1932): Lawyer-Politician, Historian and "Rough Architect" of the New Zealand state' in Shaunnagh Dorsett and Ian Hunter, eds., *Law and Politics in British Colonial Thought: Transpositions of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 199.

77. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 51–62.
78. Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, 108-40.
79. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 49.
80. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*.
81. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1st edn., vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888), 340.
82. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 3rd edn., vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893), 490, 494–495.
83. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*.
84. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1st edn., vol. 2, 8.
85. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 3rd. edn., vol. 2, 506 and 1st edn., vol. 2, 308.
86. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth,* 3rd edn., vol. 2, 511–114.
87. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 520.
88. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 74.
89. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1st edn., vol. 2, 474–475.
90. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1st edn., vol. 1, 398–407.
91. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 62–63.
92. Russell M. Posner, 'The Lord and the Drayman: James Bryce vs. Denis Kearney', *California Historical Quarterly*, 50:3 (September 1971), 281.
93. Marilyn Lake, '"The Brightness of Eyes and Quiet Assurance Which Seem to Say American": Alfred Deakin's Identification with Republican Manhood', *Australian Historical Studies,* 38:129 (2007), 32–51. Lake cites Alfred Deakin to Bryce, 27 February 1890, James Bryce papers, microfilm roll 56, f. 91, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
94. Lake, '"The Brightness of Eyes"', 35, 50.
95. James Bryce, *The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 7–8, 38–39.
96. David Blight vividly exposes the strands of American scholarship and history writing that condemned radical Reconstruction and denied racial equality, particularly toward the turn of the century. Although Blight does

not much draw on foreign sources, the ground for connection and comparison with late-Victorian British thought is fertile. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), esp. 338–379.

97. Seeley, *Expansion of England*, 205–206; Bryce, *The American Commonwealth,* 3rd edn., vol. 2, 511–514.
98. Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 4; Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 156-170.
99. Alfred Lyall to Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, 12 July 1886, Grant-Duff papers, Mss. Eur. F234/211, Asian and African Studies, British Library, London.
100. Lord Lytton to Alfred Lyall, 7 November 1883 and n.d. [1884], Lyall papers, MSS Eur. F132/57, ff. 77-84, 100-01, Asian and African Studies, British Library, London.
101. Alfred Lyall to H. P. Reeve, 8 October 1883, Lyall papers, MSS Eur. F132/101.
102. John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, UK, 2009), 189; William Wilson Hunter, *A History of British India*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899–1900).
103. William Wilson Hunter, *The India of the Queen and Other Essays* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), 44, 50–52.
104. Goldwin Smith to Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, 31 January 1901, Grant-Duff papers, Mss. Eur. F243/260.
105. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination*, 263–313.
106. George Curzon to Violet Cecil, 4 June 1902, Violet Markham papers, VM 38, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
107. Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 77–108.
108. Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire—The Last Lost Cause?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1986), 105-09, 111–113 and 'Oxford and India' in Madden and Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, 51–53. Symonds cites confidential note by Curzon, 1909, 11/m/1/3, Oxford University Archives.
109. Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 112–116 and 'Oxford and India', 59–60.

CHAPTER 4

Institutionalizing a New 'Imperial' in Turn-of-the-Century Britain

The first institution devoted to the study of the history of Britain's empire was founded at Oxford in 1905, twenty-two years after the appearance of the *Expansion of England*, and ten after John Seeley's death. The Beit Chair of Colonial History took root at a moment of pitched activism by self-professed imperialists then engrossed in debates over defense, trade, intra-imperial emigration, and national fitness.[1] It owed its creation to the anxious efforts of the imperial promoters Leo Amery, Alfred Milner, and Alfred Beit, who imagined themselves to be counteracting ignorance, even apathy, toward empire in Britain, with their campaign emanating outward from Oxford. Milner and Amery's Edwardian constructive imperialist project, taken broadly, was to define the forces of progress versus the forces of stagnation at work in the British empire, to divide that empire into normatively unequal parts, and to prescribe future policies for the development of what was commonly called Greater Britain by writing out India and dependencies. It serves as the heart of this chapter and the next, insofar as it enshrined the first formal institutions devoted to imperial or 'colonial' history, while also establishing terms for local contestation and global resistance.

Hugh Egerton, the first Beit Professor serving between 1905 and 1920, took a division between the empire of settlement and the empire of alien rule largely for granted. Seeley and likeminded commentators had established basic parameters for imperial history: their Empire was not one, but in fact several, and the colonies of settlement claimed the greatest world-historical importance among Britain's overseas territories—indeed,

A. Behm, *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion*,
Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-54850-4_4

among all the world's peoples. Seeley's *Expansion*, as we have seen, carved up the 'British empire' writ large into the empire of English settlement and the empire of India. This bisection, perfectly frozen in the two-part structure of the lectures, was fundamental to Seeley's dual project of defending Greater Britain as a clearly defined subject for public politics, as well as understanding how universal historical forces could bring about British rule in India while still leaving India itself, as well as other dependencies, outside of modern history.

Egerton was also able to write off India and the dependencies because metropolitan politics and academia had converged to carve out a space for explicitly 'colonial' history, understood as concerning the empire of settlement, at Oxford.[2] By the turn of the century, debates over constitutional and economic federation pitted imperialist against imperialist who, despite their differences, professed their ultimate concern to be the survival and success of Greater Britain. Insofar as imperial policies aroused domestic debate, India was largely sidelined; Africa made the headlines only in specific cases, and Ireland was trapped in a domestic parliamentary limbo. By 1905, imperial history—in its disciplinary incarnation, and as the vanguard of empire studies in Britain—was effectively the history of white, Anglo-Saxon settlements and colonial economies, and their relation to British policy. It was founded on the premise of difference from, and superiority to, other kinds of empire which existed, and which some contemporaries and later critics have argued, prevailed, in the British world.

This chapter explains why the unstable and contested nature of the British Empire, as it underlay both exclusionary two-empire theory and Anglo-Saxonist agendas, gave rise to the first and highly enduring institution devoted to colonial or imperial history in Britain. It introduces one of the era's most pivotal imperial statesmen, Alfred Milner, as Milner built his career by subordinating multicultural questions to the special priorities of Great and Greater Britain in the new Egyptian protectorate and then wartime Southern Africa.[3] It considers Milner's intellectual roots in corporatist idealism that thrived at Oxford between the 1870s and 1890s. It invokes turn-of-the-century Southern Africa as the forge of reform and self-conscious imperial awakening, where young Oxonian talent plunged into questions of imperial purpose and destiny, and sought to redefine the very content of 'imperialism'. It then, crucially, reveals why a young Milnerite, Leo Amery, put forward in 1904 a proposal for the Beit Chair in Colonial History at Oxford. Milner sponsored the effort; Cecil Rhodes's

business partner Alfred Beit underwrote it. Amery's proposal explicitly excluded India and dependencies from the purview of the Beit Chair, an aggressive framing which reflected both the continuing influence of a Seeleyan two-empire framework and a more vigorous push toward Greater British consolidation—unity at all costs. That cost, after 1903, included domestic political stability and Britain's core moral orthodoxy, its sixty-year-old policy of free trade. The early Beit program would stagger amidst this unrest, but its founding speaks to the stakes of historical frameworks underpinning contemporary imperialist campaigns.

'If I Live, I Mean to Do You Some Credit Yet': The Late-Victorian Idealist-Imperial Trajectory

As well-established Oxford historians and public moralists, Freeman, Froude, and Bryce had been uniquely positioned to meld the Anglo-Saxon chauvinism of settler colonial politics with metropolitan scholarship in the 1880s and 1890s. All the same, Freeman and Froude sensed they had been left behind by a contemporaneous shift of mind, moving each to quiet rage. Freeman lamented that Greek and Latin had lost their monopoly to 'modern' subjects, leaving a generation without any conception of the great heritage rooting Anglo-Saxon institutions in Ancient Greece. Froude, meanwhile, saw the turn toward science and 'progress' away from classical thinkers as a target against which to reissue an anti-liberal manifesto: 'Mankind are made unequal. Legislation cannot make them equal, and freedom does not create the virtues which might make the presumption into reality'.[4] Yet, by contending that the 'only true progress is moral progress', Froude in spite of himself captured the spirit of the *fin-de-siècle* university.[5] The Oxford to which he spoke sought earnestly to match faith with science, classical example with the promise of a new society, and took up projects that soon engulfed an empire far beyond Benjamin Jowett's Balliol.

Oxford, by the 1890s, incubated two shifts reconfiguring the relationship between historical thought and imperial politics. One was idealism, the philosophical movement that emerged in the last third of the nineteenth century, basing conceptions of self, society, right, and duty on 'a new metaphysics of human nature, in which individuality was something born out of the membership of a wider social whole'. Its figureheads included Balliol graduates T. H. Green, Edward Caird, and Bernard Bosanquet, and

F. H. Bradley of University and Merton colleges. Idealists advocated an increased role for the state and a social conception of rights, and their social and moral outlook celebrated an 'intimate connection between theory and praxis' premised on the underlying unity of all human knowledge. All 'ideas were systematically linked together into one whole with no fundamental divisions between the different departments of learning'. All university disciplines—history, economics, philosophy, classics—entered the service of solving 'the Social Problem', perceived as the growing gulf between classes and the alienation of the urban working masses and their descent into poverty and ignorance.[6] The second phenomenon, the rise of an economic history focusing on the English past and the role of the state, also harkened back to the mounting concern with social conditions during the 'Great Depression' of the 1870s and 1880s. This brand of economic history, also called historical economics by its practitioners, developed across multiple British universities, especially in the work of philosopher-turned-historian William Cunningham at Cambridge. Yet it was at Balliol under Jowett in particular that the field received a forceful boost from the religious, intellectual, and social imperatives of idealism articulated by Green, and embodied in the historical lectures and educational outreach of Arnold Toynbee.[7]

Even Jowett, widely celebrated for his organizational innovation and eye for talent, was sometimes flummoxed by the cerebral passions that Green, Toynbee, and their pursuits unleashed among the students. German influences abounded: as philosophical idealism drew on Kant and Hegel, economic history looked to Gustav Schmoller in developing a critique of modern industrial society and the state's withdrawal from the lives of its citizens. Green preached a gospel of civic duty to audiences growing in numbers and increasingly drawn from the middle classes, exhorting them to find freedom from the commercial and industrial labyrinth of their day through social and political service. Toynbee, in turn, committed his scholarship to investigating the development of the British industrial system from the mid-eighteenth century, a project that he believed would undermine existing opposition to state-directed social reform. Further, Toynbee was pivotal in establishing institutional channels for this work. With Canon Samuel Barnett, he championed the university settlement movement which relocated Oxford students to lecture and conduct outreach activities in Whitechapel, London. In Toynbee's brief lifetime, he impressed awed listeners with his eloquence and his conviction that, through study, debate, and service, the present generation could reform

the organization of industrial society. Ethics were fundamentally inextricable from economics, and economics from politics. The upper and middle classes could and should facilitate the self-realization and well-being of the working masses. Even with his passing at the age of 30, Toynbee's passion inspired a groundswell of interest in social activism at Oxford throughout the 1880s. By 1889, the *Oxford magazine* was reporting that 'Oxford is full of economic theorists interested in the solution of the problems of the day'. Toynbee's student and closest academic collaborator, W. J. Ashley, was another main contributor to the birth of historical economics.[8]

The most enduring public testament to Toynbee—and Green, for that matter—prevailed in the figure of Alfred Milner, a Balliol undergraduate in the 1870s who went on to become one of the most influential and controversial agents at the nerve center of the late British empire. Though Milner fell under Toynbee's influence only toward the end of his studies, in 1878, he went on to carry the latter's reforming crusade forward into new imperial arenas, from London to Egypt to South Africa. Upon going down from Oxford, Milner began lecturing for the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and helped Canon Barnett found Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel after Toynbee's death in 1883. No man, Milner eulogized, was so well qualified as Toynbee to write the history of 'the great industrial revolution of a hundred to fifty years ago, and to write it in a way which should make its human aspect live before the eyes of the reader. … [H]is memory remains to rebuke selfishness and silence cynicism, to strengthen faith in individual goodness and in the possibility of general progress, and to hold high the standard of social duty amid the growing perplexities of modern life'.[9]

In 1882, Milner abandoned a career in law in favor of journalism and politics, assuring Jowett that 'I had rather be a poor obscure man all my life, doing the work I care for very much, than a well-to-do and possibly distinguished man doing work I scarcely care for at all'. His closest friend, Philip Lyttelton Gell, backed him with more inspired words: 'What [Milner] craves and what alone will hold him are strong human interests'.[10] The quest for 'human interest' led Milner on a meandering path, from the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the leadership of Liberal politician John Morley and imperialist and social reformer W. T. Stead, to a formative stint as private secretary to the Liberal hawk G. J. Goschen. Following his patron into Liberal Unionism after the Home Rule crisis of 1886, Milner praised 'the sane and manly policy' of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists 'as the Imperial party, the party of strong government, national defence and a

forward colonial policy', but reserved only contempt for the 'pseudo-Democrats' he saw waffling in the electoral winds. 'Gladstone in office is bad', he snarled in 1889, 'but Gladstone in office opposed by Churchill is a prospect too loathsome to be contemplated without thoughts of suicide'.[11]

Milner passed up the chance to serve in India as viceroy's private secretary, dissuaded by the prospect of isolation on the subcontinent and the ongoing marginalization of the Raj and its servants in British political life. But he accepted, in 1889, the post of director-general of accounts in Egypt. Finally, Milner found his calling: 'I have realised the idea with which I started, of going somewhere where good work was being done by Englishmen, unhampered or little hampered by the blighting influence of home politics'.[12] Egypt was a career-defining move. There, Milner contemplated the British protectorate as a 'strange political experiment, unique in history' which would henceforth determine the social and economic welfare of Egyptians. All had been for the better, to his mind; the 'most absurd experiment in human government has been productive of one of the most remarkable harvests of human improvement'. Further, as Milner saw it, Egypt was a teachable example: where British interests were at stake, Britons could and should intervene to instruct troubled societies in 'the essential principles of good government'; the 'true nature of British influence' was 'a force making for the simplest ideas of honesty, humanity, and justice'. By circumstance, the British had found themselves in a position to display, without theoretical hindrance, 'one of the most marked characteristics of their race—the practical instinct which enables men of British birth… to make the best of limited opportunities, without troubling their heads about the theoretical imperfections of the system'. The task of educating Egyptians in the art of 'good government' required only 'that incarnation of compromise, the average Briton, to accept the system with all its faults… to do the best he could under untoward circumstances'.[13] By squarely confronting, and then unequivocally embracing, the realities of inequality, disenfranchisement, and the lack of citizen-sovereignty, Britons could proceed to make the world anew.

Milner's reflections on the Egyptian protectorate marked an important extension of late-Victorian Oxford's intellectual enthusiasm for reform into the practical politics of empire. Thinkers of the 1880s and 1890s recognized that new stakes produced new methods for the study of past economies and social formations. The idealist turn, on top of the rise of constitutional-cum-scientific history, bound historical study ever more

firmly to questions of political, administrative, military, and spiritual reform on multiple fronts: domestic, settler, and authoritarian-interventionist. And while Milner's *England in Egypt* was not promoted as a history, its repeated appeal to 'experiment' reflected a rejection of long-standing *laissez faire* views of foreign and imperial policy in favor of hands-on engagement.[14] In Milner's reading, British force was justified by an expanding realm of 'imperial duty'—here, the defeat of Arabi nationalism and elimination of poverty and corruption. Outsiders could teach broken societies how to become communities. Yet, the fact remained, as Milner himself admitted: England had been drawn into Egypt primarily to sort out affairs, and then secondarily, to imbue Egyptians with the 'honesty, humanity, and justice' which would negate the liabilities Egypt posed to European foreign relations and finance. Educated men could best manage global crisis through the creation of pacific local citizenries—a central message of the idealist-imperialist turn which would reemerge even more forcefully in the twentieth century.

Milner returned to England in 1894 to take up the chairmanship of the Board of Inland Revenue, enjoying the lofty reputation his Egyptian work had earned him and holding out for another imperial appointment. That opportunity came in 1897, when Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain offered Milner the high commissionership of South Africa. 'Whatever I may have attempted hitherto, it has been child's play compared with this job', he wrote to fellow Balliol alumnus Sidney Low. 'I may seem sometimes to be doing odd things—to those who are not on the spot to see the whole game—and I shall have no time to explain. At such times it will be a relief to feel that there are people in England who believe in one and will not condemn on the first appearances or imperfect information'.[15] Already, Milner anticipated the messiness of his designated task, and the driving force he believed he would need to carry out his vision in South Africa. His mandate was to establish imperial supremacy and secure British interests at the Cape, a crucial position on the sea-lanes to India, and to subdue the defiant Transvaal government. But, as his premonitions of 1897 proved, the mission hardly stopped there. Milner's determination to remake the South African colonies into a prosperous, British-led federation led him into a war which would rivet the attention of the world and test the ideological core of Britain's imperial project.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 would pit settler against settler, throw into doubt the pacific rationale of British global power, and bring

Greater Britain into ever closer contact with the Raj and territories under subject rule. It would also give rise to a profound intellectual effort to further divide the British empire, past and future, along lines of race, settlement, and constitution. As Chap. 3 explained, the 'colonial question' had been crucial as the historical profession sought to resolve its own internal conflicts in the in 1880s and 1890s, alternately offering racial theory, constitutionalism, and, in Froude's case, the settler heroic, for deployment in debates about emigration, civic virtue, and geopolitical balance. Constitutionalism had stuck even after William Stubbs left academia in 1884. Far from withering under Seeley's methodological assault or Froude's relativistic critique, constitutional history became increasingly compatible with the dramatic lessons of the *Expansion*, and of *Oceana*. At Oxford, enthusiasm for social and moral reform emerged in an atmosphere already permeated by 'constitutional progress' as shorthand for centuries of world-historical advance. At the same time, diasporic politics, migration concerns, and global labor competition reinforced the fundamental influence of evolutionary racial theories on historical study, as countless activists articulated a need to separate the Anglo-Saxon past from different and supposedly inferior trajectories.

The South African crisis supercharged these dynamics, and gave corporatist idealism, borne of the overlap between socialism and radical conservativism in Britain c. 1900, an enduring foothold in the world of knowledge making. The Beit Chair would be just one aspect of a larger and fractious movement. Milner had taken up the governorship of Cape Colony and the high commissionership of South Africa in 1897 already convinced that the empire was the field in which Britons, at home and overseas, would redress 'the radical deficiencies of the organization of the state'. Milner relished concrete objectives and disliked circuitous empirical criticism; when confronted with irresolution or the use of force, he chose force. As Eric Stokes has observed, Milner accepted the role of lone visionary, of champion for the fuller realization of Britain's world role, in his precipitation of war against Kruger's state in October 1899.[16]

The South African war rent British political society. Fingers pointed furiously across party lines, yet Milner alone enjoyed the anger and scorn of both Liberal and Tory parties, the outrage of emerging anti-imperialists, such as John Hobson, and the weariness of his own government as the conflict dragged on.[17] Saul Dubow has remarked on 'the zeal with which

Milner worked to secure British supremacy' during the war. But Milner's plans for the establishment of a federal South African state, in which Boers were subordinate to British governance, were blunted by resistance in both the Cape and London even before the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed in May 1902. It was the ensuing epic of postwar reconstruction which would reveal Milner's, and his followers', evolving concept of mission, melding racial destiny the question of engaging and guiding non-Britons. Faced with political attrition, Milner and his subordinates honed a language which emphasized 'mutuality and cooperation', rather than British domination, in a federated South Africa, a 'community of free nations gathered together under the British flag', premised not just on the alliance of British and Afrikaner communities, but the scrupulous exclusion of indigenous African, colored, and diasporic Asian populations in the service of 'European' political fusion.[18]

Milner left South Africa, exhausted and gloomy, in April 1905, and in so doing handed over the reins of an emerging legacy, both in South Africa and Britain, to members of the 'Kindergarten' he had gathered around him as High Commissioner—a group comprising mainly recent Oxford graduates, identified through Oxford and Colonial Office connections, whom Milner tapped both formally and informally to manage reconstruction and conduct wider imperial advocacy. Too bruised to serve in any official capacity after 1905, Milner nonetheless acted as guiding force back at Oxford as a Rhodes trustee. He, George Parkin, and Lewis Michell were, from 1903, responsible for coordinating the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford. As High Commissioner, Milner may have bristled at the 'the immoral gang, moneygrubbers, jobbers and at all times potential rebels, more or less connected with Rhodes and his enterprises, who no doubt, hate me equally because I represent honesty and Imperial control'.[19] But Milner embraced Rhodes's wider, semi-mystical prophecy of a prosperous and dominant British settler state in Africa and the spiritual and political union of a global Anglo-Saxondom. Steady work toward such ends underpinned Milner's Edwardian involvement in Oxford affairs and the Rhodes Trust. In cultivating the Kindergarten, he passed the initiative to young activists. It was through these channels, among their many projects linking scholarship, administration, politics, and journalism, that the field of colonial history achieved formal shape at Oxford in 1905, initiated by a Kindergarten affiliate and premised on the primacy and ascendancy of British settler empire.

Divided Empire: 'The Starting Point' and Political Ends of Leo Amery

Institutionalized imperial or 'colonial' history could have materialized in 1895, in the shape of a colonial lectureship as memorial to Seeley at Cambridge. But Seeley's circle of supporters, most of them subscribers of the recently defunct Imperial Federation League, had neither the resources nor the clout within the university to push through a scheme even so modest as an essay prize.[20] Cambridge named a library after Seeley. Oxford became the first home of imperial history.

The discipline's academic genesis came at the urging and support of Milner, Leo Amery, and Alfred Beit—the latter, Rhodes's business partner—all three deeply concerned with manipulating relations between metropolitan Britain, reconstruction-era South Africa, and wider settler-colonial interests. In perceiving themselves as struggling against contemporary apathy, they were Seeleyan, as they were also in their exclusive focus on the empire of settlement. And in ways of which Seeley could only have dreamt, they envisioned their historical school as an institution, a citadel in which to train a generation that had seen the demise of the organized imperial federation movement, the rise of naval competition with Germany and the United States, and the clash within Britain as well as between Britons and Boers during the South African War.[21] The main inspiration for a colonial history apparatus came from the rapid materialization of the Rhodes Scholarship program, which brought young men from the diasporic colonies, the United States, and Germany together at Oxford to strengthen the sentimental and political ties of an emerging Anglo-Saxon world state—at least in Cecil Rhodes's reckoning.[22] The shattering controversy over Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for tariff reform, launched in 1903, provided an additional but crucial context for the Beit endowment. The tariff reform campaign had exploded like a landmine under already-divided groups of imperialists in Britain, who for years had squabbled not merely on party lines, but over the justness of campaigns against the Boers, imperial defense, state intervention, and the nature of the military and political ties binding the white empire. Now, imperialists drew swords over 'Free Trade' and 'Protection', unleashing a sectarian propaganda war.[23]

Colonial history was the product of this seizure in imperial politics in that the campaign for its institutionalization began in the mind of Amery, a

radical Tory and ardent tariff reformer. In late spring 1904, he proposed the idea to Beit, who in turn offered Oxford University an endowment for the teaching of colonial history. University leadership accepted, an election committee formed, and the History Board took on its new charge. Amery would later explain that the inspiration for the Beit Chair came when 'I realized that when the first Rhodes Scholars arrived they would find practically no provision at Oxford for the teaching of the history of the British Empire, or even anything like an adequate supply of books on the subject'.[24] Such were the thoughts of an iconoclastic young lawyer, journalist, aspiring Unionist politician, and fellow of All Souls, who had come up as an undergraduate at Balliol College in the generation just behind Milner. Amery was deeply affected by the idealist conception of the state as the locus of all human potential, and, more than many of his contemporaries, made the creation of an ethnically and economically unified imperial state the supreme focus of a very long career, which, from the 1890s until his death in 1955, took him from the staff of the *Times* to the Unionist benches in House of Commons and the highest positions in the Admiralty and Colonial and India Offices. As he would write in later life, 'The starting point of all my political thinking, from school days onwards, had been the British Empire or Commonwealth conceived as a unit and as the final object of patriotic emotion and action'.[25]

Amery confessed to being consumed by the goal to make 'that unity more effective' by the time he completed undergraduate work in 1896. He longed for the re-engineering of the fiscal, military, and spiritual mechanisms of the British state, and set himself to this task at two main levels. After a stint as *Times* reporter and attaché of Milner's young circle in South Africa, Amery returned to England to campaign for army reform through the creation of a central and autonomous central command held together by the common outlook and experiences of its officers.[26] His efforts gained prominence through the *Times History of the War in South Africa*, which he produced in nine volumes from 1899 to 1909.[27] His reputation as an expert on army reform in turn influenced his involvement in the wider movement for 'national efficiency', which arose in the light of military reversals that plagued the British army, as well as concerns about the degeneration of the industrial and urban poor in England. Amery was also one of the original members of the Co-Efficients Club convened by Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1902, to institutionalize the 'mutual sympathies of

Fabians and constructive imperialists' in debating the necessity of a strong state and the ends of centralizing policy.[28]

When fiscal policy emerged as one of the most incendiary issues in Edwardian politics in 1903, Amery fervently threw himself behind Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign, spearheading auxiliary movements aimed to deflate support for free trade, or *laissez-faire*, which Amery perceived as a false doctrine of dissolution and social irresponsibility.[29] Visions of reformed military command and reconstructed trade policy merged in Amery's mind toward one overarching goal. As he himself reflected, his inspiration for a centralized army command stemmed from his observations on contemporary German military approaches. Mindset, methods, and mutual trust amongst a corps were more important than rules and manuals in coordinating joint action:

> … Imperial unity would depend far more on unity of political methods and outlook and on close contact through free co-operation than on any kind of rigid constitutional structure. It was that conviction, as well as my economic views, that led me to throw myself with such passionate and sustained enthusiasm into Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for Imperial Preference, while whatever earlier views I held in favour of some scheme of Imperial Federation gradually faded out together.[30]

In short, Amery looked to affinity and practice, not constitutions, as the fundamental basis of unity in the empire. From this point, he determined that only economic reciprocity within an isolated bloc could set the stage for wider cooperation amongst the component parts of global Britain.

On a local level, this concept of joint experience and shared knowledge influenced his strategy for imperial history at Oxford. As the South African camp of imperialists with which he had become associated took on a concrete presence in Oxford, Amery schemed opportunities to reinforce them. The first Rhodes Scholars descended on England in Michaelmas term 1904: from 'that vision of the unifying influence of education in the environment of a communal life, itself inspired by memories of Oxford, it was an easy transition to think of life at Oxford as itself the real unifying influence for the carrying out of [Rhodes's] wider dream'.[31] Beyond this corporatist vision of imperialist life, however, other factors crucially influenced Amery's contribution as the mastermind of the Beit Chair at Oxford. First and simply, and as he later explained, his concern at the time was 'on

our relations with the Dominions, and on the importance of recognizing increasingly their equal status with the Mother Country and of developing co-operation in every field, but, first and foremost, in the economic field'.[32]

That was putting it lightly. Amery wanted to split the existing British world into conceptual, political, and legal halves. Only four months after finagling the colonial history deal with Beit, he would write to Colonial Secretary Alfred Lyttelton, demanding that Lyttelton bisect the empire along racial lines. The goal was to shore up unity between Britain and the settler colonies , and the crucial problem was managing white backlash in Australia and South Africa regarding the immigration of Asian and Indian labor as permitted under existing government policy. 'The question is not one of the rights and privileges of individuals at all', Amery protested in August 1904. 'It is simply the question of race, and until the Imperial Government has the courage to treat race questions as such and put an end to all this rubbish about education, sanitation, etc. we shall never get straight'. He suggested creating a two-tiered system to 'divide British subjects into at least two classes, (a) the full British citizen, and (b) the British subject', where subjects not possessing the right to self-govern could not move freely across borders within the empire. The 'old position that one British subject is as good as another' had to be given up, Amery maintained; only then would the 'Colonies'—the crux of the imperial future—be content that 'Asiatics' would present 'no danger to the development of their civilization'.[33] This striking demand reflected Amery's ongoing crusade to put the mood of Greater Britain at the forefront of all imperial policy decisions.

Amery's push reflected the sweeping turn, as discussed in Chap. 3, amongst late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British activists toward mediating and privileging the demands of self-governing colonies, or settler communities, in intra-imperial debates over race, immigration, and citizenship.[34] Such dialogue gathered further urgency during ministerial and civic brokering between British and Boer leaders in postwar Southern Africa—problems which loomed large in Amery's mind. The political and cultural activities undertaken to promote European solidarity in South Africa by Amery's Oxford and Kindergarten acquaintances, such as Philip Kerr and John Buchan, linked Amery to the racial politics of reconstruction, and provided a backdrop to his formulation of colonial history at Oxford.[35] Further, in 1904 and 1905, Amery witnessed questions of race, labor, and colonial ethics merging in reaction to Milner's

campaign to import Chinese laborers into the disrupted Rand mining industry. An uproar against 'Chinese slavery' ensued in Britain, and ultimately factored in the electoral downfall of the Unionist government in early 1906, and the exit of Lyttelton, who as Colonial Secretary had acceded to Milner's lobbying. A Commons censure of Milner followed in May 1906.[36] The management of racial encounters in the self-governing empire thus became, for Amery, a fundamental issue awaiting recognition and hard-nosed resolution. Until parameters for the local management of the colonies' own racial and migration policies were hammered out, he believed, cooperation among the white populations of the empire could not be fully achieved.

More subtly, the Beit Chair campaign also reflected Amery's notion of making elite education, particularly at Oxford, the bedrock of national discussions on reform. Oxford had been the site of Amery's discovery of all that was wrong with the existing order: 'Even in my undergraduate days I had been amazed at the unquestioning belief of my tutors in what seemed to me the shallow generalizations and obvious fallacies of the orthodox economists.... My revolt against their doctrines had even led me into the outskirts of the Socialist camp'.[37] His delight in returning to the intellectual fray in 1903 was evident, through his attacks on the free-trade 'Professors' Manifesto' in a series of *Times* letters as 'Tariff Reformer'.[38] He also reveled in the thought that young Oxford scholars might wield disproportionate power over otherwise iconic political actors. One episode would shine in Amery's memories of his time on Chamberlain's campaign trail in 1905—that of Chamberlain's address to a group of Oxford undergraduates on the merits of preference and protection. 'For the first and only time that I can remember', Amery mused, '[Chamberlain] seemed to be to show signs of nervousness, as if conscious of all the critical young minds prepared to find flaws in his arguments or in his style'. This exchange matched the eagerness with which he responded to the introduction of the Rhodes Scholarships. Amery recognized the magnitude of Rhodes's gesture, and the potential of the 'communal life', but saw these hindered by the state of historical teaching in the university. A project was born.[39]

Amery met Alfred Beit, Cecil Rhodes's fellow managing director of the De Beers diamond company and a founding trustee of Rhodes's estate, for the first time at a 'men's dinner' hosted by F. Leverton Harris in June 1904. Harris's table marked the confluence between churning pro-tariff Unionist politics and influential trade interests. Aside from his support for

tariff reform, Harris was a parliamentary expert on shipping policy who would later successfully campaign to preserve British rights of search and seizure, as well as engineer crucial aspects of Britain's blockade of Germany after 1916.[40] As early as 1904, Harris saw foreign conflict as imminent and prescribed safeguards and barriers prioritizing national safety above unchecked trade expansion.[41] Amery, again, endorsed the institution of controls in both imperial trade and defense, preferring a secure cordon and internal cooperation to unregulated global exposure. The elder Beit, like Rhodes, also supported imperial protection, and the isolation of the settler empire as an object for trade and public policymaking.[42] Through his networks and funding, Beit was a major representative of South African interests in London-based politics.[43] He also brokered metropolitan influence on South African affairs, not least of all through political payments from the Rhodes Trust to South African Liberals during reconstruction-era elections of 1903, which were often remitted by Beit himself.[44] Upon hearing of the Beit's planned attendance at Harris's dinner, Amery insisted on being seated next to him. 'I launched out at once on the absurd situation the Rhodes scholars would find if they thought they could learn anything, at the heart of the Empire, of that Empire's history. As a practical man he asked me what was needed to meet the deficiency'. How to bring together the future leaders of the empire behind a vision of cooperation based on political and ethnic sympathy, in a global yet economically enclosed community? Before the end of the soup course, Beit had agreed to finance Amery's plan for a professorship in colonial history.[45]

Imperial Unity Through the Crosshairs of Constitutionalism

When Amery composed a rationale for the Beit endowment, he testified to a distinct intersection in academic history and Edwardian imperialism. First, he prefaced the proposal for colonial history on the recent expansion of the modern European history curriculum to 1878, from 1815, a reform prompted by the recently installed Regius Professor, Charles Harding Firth.[46] A new stage had been set for studying current problems in the light of the contemporary past; and yet Amery feared it was already dominated by English political history, 'an enormous subject' with 'a character entirely of its own'. The field he envisioned was separate: 'another political history… the development of the British colonies and dependencies and their

relation to the central power'. Importantly, the dependencies fell out of his final suggestion of a special subject, 'the British Colonial history including the history of the American colonies which became the U.S. up to their separation'.[47] His proposal was steeped in reference to prevailing modes of studying constitutional history at Oxford:

> From the point of view of ordinary citizenship, the history and development of the Colonies is nowadays quite as important as the history of the development of our parliamentary institutions, and it is monstrous that at the present moment when there is no educated man, let alone history student, who does not know all about the Magna Charta, that there are practically none who know anything about the configuration of Canada and, even worse, there is no one at present in Oxford qualified to teach on the subject.[48]

It might seem a surprising rhetorical move, given Amery's obsession with fiscal policy and imperial defense. Rather than referring to his abiding passions, Amery instead pointed to the expanded domain and contemporary import of modern history, and the ongoing dominance of constitutional modes of reading the English past. Yet even without overt political campaigning, Amery's proposal introduced two major tactics for bringing an imperial awakening to Oxford. One was confronting the dominant constitutionalism of the history curriculum; the other was innovating on that same, entrenched theme.

English constitutional history at Oxford had developed as the core of the study of modern history under Stubbs in the mid-Victorian years, and it grew in influence alongside the idealist movement.[49] This motif largely corresponded with idealism's emphasis on citizenship, which implied a consciousness of human dignity and purpose as inseparable from a common good, as expressed in the institutional structures of the state. Constitutional history provided a complement and case in point, as a field explaining, scientifically, the evolving virtue of English institutions.[50] The problem was that, by the turn of the century, imperial theorists and professional historians alike increasingly despaired of parliamentary supremacy as a sufficient historical lesson for the next generation of British leaders.[51] Amery, by his own admission, had recently defected from the imperial federationism of his undergraduate days to the fiscal and defense reform lobby. His talk of parliamentary institutions and configurations in 1904 was a means of infiltrating the curriculum, not an end. At the same time, wider

disciplinary change was afoot. Amery proposed a professorship in colonial history just as Firth, a specialist in seventeenth-century English politics and himself an undergraduate product of Balliol, was embarking on a long and bitter campaign to break the power of the tutorial system and constitutional subjects in the history school. Firth was sympathetic to the new colonial field, but wary of its reception and aware that his vision for a research-oriented school of political history faced stiff resistance from the tutors.[52] Any introduction of a colonial special subject in this context would have to be gradual and delicately organized, Firth told Amery. It would be better to ask the university for a pledge to supporting colonial history as a distinct field, rather than the faculty.[53] Indeed, that is just the shape the agreement between Beit, Warden William Anson of All Souls, and the university took in the end. The colonial history chair was funded by Beit as a gift to the university, and then treated as the charge of the History Faculty, to be worked in amongst political and constitutional history courses.

Colonial history was intended to provide an analytic focus on the self-governing empire. In their correspondence, Amery and Beit alternated between the terms 'Imperial' and 'colonial' to describe this distinction; but in either case they sought to create a discrete field of enquiry around diasporic affairs which would explain the spread of Anglo-Saxondom and ensure its persistence.[54] Despite Amery's disdain for narrow constitutionalism, Canadian charters were at least as important as the Magna Carta, because they were the imperial rejoinders to what Amery saw as an insular island-story that had infected the minds of the English elite. More informed policy innovation could proceed once a rising generation of British and colonial leaders recognized common cause. Toward this end, the program was grounded in an exclusive conception of the British empire as white, self-governing, and oriented toward the future union or at least cooperation of Anglo-Saxon peoples, including the United States. Among the conditions attached to Beit's offer for a permanent endowment for colonial history at Oxford were the following:

> That the History of 'British Dominions over the Sea'… shall not include the History of India or its dependencies, but shall include the following subjects:-
>
> (a) The History of Imperial Policy towards British possessions,
>
> (b) The detailed History of the separate self-governing Colonies including the American Colonies before the Declaration of Independence,

> (c) The detailed History of all other British possessions—past and present—exclusive of India and its dependencies.[55]

India and dependencies defined Beit and Amery's conception of colonial history through contrast. This was a choice, not a response to any prominence India already held in the academic life of the university. Far from it: by 1905, India was the domain of no single faculty or institution.[56] Amery, Beit, and Milner would have faced little competition had they wanted to include India. But they self-consciously steered an alternate course, cultivating discussion of imperial civic reciprocity which were only feasible once parts of the empire had been excluded. In addition to provisions for a professorship, lectureship, and book fund, Beit promised to contribute £50 per year for an annual essay 'on the advantages of "Imperial Citizenship"'. At a time when questions of rights in the British world increasingly foundered on assertions of racial difference, neither 'imperial' nor 'citizenship' was a neutral term.[57]

The History Board, in receipt of the draft decree, left Beit's Anglo-visionary pulpit intact.[58] The terms of the endowment were finalized by early 1905. The program was not only fully funded but elevated from the start, relative to the salaries, prizes, and institutional resources attached to other Oxford history chairs.[59] The first Beit Professor was elected by a distinguished committee headlined by Milner; H. A. L. Fisher, then a New College history tutor and rising educationist; Alfred Lyttelton, Liberal Unionist Colonial Secretary; Firth, as Regius Professor; Vice-Chancellor W. W. Merry; and colonial historian J. A. Doyle. The candidate they elected was arguably the leading expert in a nascent field.

The Rise and Fall of Egerton's Empire

Yet colonial history at Oxford did not initially take flight, falling susceptible to both the conflicts that plagued imperial politics in Edwardian Britain, and the whims of personality. The Beit Chair's first holder was Hugh Egerton, the Corpus Christi, Oxford-educated classicist-turned-lawyer and Colonial Office civil servant, who had served as Charles Lucas's collaborator at the Emigrants' Information Office in the 1880s and 1890s, and had published the accessible *Short History of British Colonial Policy* in 1897.[60] Despite hopes for 'a first class man',[61] it soon became apparent that Egerton could not lecture. Worse, he suffered from acute personal and

professional insecurities that would persist during his fifteen-year tenure at Oxford. There had been warning signs, and Milner had fretted that Beit shortlist left him 'unconvinced that any of them would be more than decently adequate. … Somehow I feel that we are about to take a very momentous decision rather lightly'.[62] Despite these reservations, the Beit committee elected Egerton to the professorship in early December 1905.[63]

In Edgerton's defense, few figures had emerged combining scholarly standing with policy experience and expertise in settler colonial affairs. 'Have we really thought of all the possible good men, who are not applicants?' Milner entreated Fisher. 'I think there are some such among non-academic men. You & Firth must know of some among professional historians'.[64] The choice, in the end, had come down to Egerton, a Colonial Office workhorse who showed ranging, if not inspiring, historical knowledge of his subject and had been tapped to contribute to Acton's *Cambridge Modern History*; a well-known but controversial historical economist, W. J. Ashley; a well-liked young Balliol history tutor with no colonial specialization; and an English historian of seventeenth century Holland who offered mastery of several European languages and articles in the *English Historical Review*—but 'No evidence that he is Class A'.[65]

Of this group, the scope of Egerton's work best reflected the founders' and electors' fundamental concern with contemporary settler empire. After ten years promoting settler emigration, Egerton had asked to be relieved in 1896 in order to finish *A Short History of British Colonial Policy*.[66] His *Short History* was an authoritative survey of diasporic relations with the metropole, demonstrating a deep affinity for settler communities and reveling in their development, even at the hands of metropolitan injustice or neglect. That monograph would be the best remembered of Egerton's career;[67] it provided the basis for his strongest testimonials for the Beit Chair, and repeatedly received approving notes in Milner's records on the election.[68] Egerton's empire had, at its heart, an inherent English impulse toward the 'occupation of overseas lands'.[69] Technology and trade merely facilitated this development, which had progressed over three centuries almost in spite of the gaffes and inconsistencies of governments at home. The goal of empire was the population of the world's waste spaces with the best stock of English descent possible. In Egerton's view, neither commercial affairs nor constitutionalism were sufficient mechanisms in themselves for achieving that end. Trade remained a secondary concern unless it put a wedge between Englishmen overseas and at home, i.e., as the unfortunate

root of American revolution.[70] Conversely, the unwritten English constitution held no keys to understanding the colonial world: 'Just as plants sown in different climates give different results, so we cannot be sure what forms the constitutional seed sown in America, Australia, and Africa may finally take; but this at least we know, that the plant which finally issues will have owed much to the fostering care of British officials'.[71] 'Policy', loosely defined as the attitudes informing the relationship between imperial and colonial governments, was what mattered.

As Egerton saw it, the issue was becoming critical. Government and mass opinion were converging across the nineteenth century. By 1870, 'a new chief actor had been entering upon the scene; the democracy was taking its place beside the middle classes and the governing families in the working out of English history. What would be its attitude towards the empire? In other words, What would be its Colonial policy?'[72] It was now more important than ever to isolate the settler empire in the public mind. Egerton instructed readers to consider a British colony as unlike anything the world had seen before. Rather than the isolated, independent units of the Greek world, the conquered dependencies of the Spanish, or the factories of the Dutch, a British colony was 'a community, politically dependent in some shape or form, the majority, or the dominant portion, of whose members belong by birth or origin to the Mother country, such persons having no intention to return…'.[73] Egerton avoided the subject of subject peoples. He made not one single mention of the Indian subcontinent in *A Short History*.[74] He also avoided discussions of British political or commercial interventions in Africa, except for a brief reminder about the importance of British paramountcy over an 'Old Testament' people, the Boers.[75] When he examined the problem of slavery in the British West Indies, he did so with condolence for the planters who had been misled, supposedly, during the sentimental play of emancipation in the 1830s and 1840s, and then abandoned to economic ruin because philanthropists in metropolitan Britain failed to follow any truly empathetic policy. Jamaica, in particular, suffered under the racial imbalance wrought by emancipation. In Egerton's words, 'there seemed opening ahead of the Curtian gulf of a black democracy' in front of an unprepared oligarchy. The only remedy to this problem and to the labor shortage, Egerton held, was white immigration, a solution sadly rendered impossible by the recalcitrance of small freeholders and the power they held under the existing constitution. The whole affair had resulted in the self-immolation of responsible government

in Jamaica after the Morant Bay revolt—an object lesson in the perils of treating a racially and economically heterogeneous population as uniformly prepared for political participation.[76]

This narrow analytic focus on settler affairs marked Egerton, in the words of an otherwise unimpressed Milner, as an expert—'say, as even "the leading specialist"' in the field.[77] Moreover, he offered references from Charles Dilke as well as American historians such as George B. Adams, Edward Channing, and George Louis Beer, who attested to his authority in U.S. universities.[78] Their praises held him in high stead at a time when imperial federationists and geostrategists dreamt of Anglo-Saxon reunification, or at least effective cooperation between American and British empires.[79] Egerton waxed on in his work about missteps and injustices done to colonists across the Atlantic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These, however, had been British policy errors that stemmed from a misunderstanding in the first instance, and from a *lack* of colonial policy in the second—easily remedied if the nation could be kept alert to the feelings of its fellows overseas.

The other point in favor of Egerton was the fact that his references uniformly identified him as a non-controversialist who could tackle the divisive issues of the day, such as trade policy, without bias. This praise had left Egerton in good stead against one of two other leading candidates for the job, W. J. Ashley, historical economist and the first professor of commerce at the newly created University of Birmingham. Ashley, too, came with strong North American recommendations after stints at Toronto and Harvard, but his chances at the Beit Chair were marred by his visible support for Joseph Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign. 'Backed by Joe', Milner noted. Ashley himself despaired of punching through, for aside from Milner and Lyttelton, a Liberal Unionist, the remaining electors consisted of Oxford academics.[80] Egerton, on the other hand, was touted by testimonials as 'patriotic without extravagance' and 'scrupulously fair to all persons and all shades of opinion'.[81]

But Egerton soon became a nonentity at Oxford. He wasn't sufficiently proselytizing; his experience at the Colonial Office led him to a gradualist view of policy: the judgment of history, he wrote, '[turned] with grim indifference from conflict of principles and parties'.[82] The tone was all wrong for the day. Further, insecurities about his qualifications and remit seem to have dogged Egerton from the start. His inaugural lecture, a plea for 'The Claims of Colonial History on the Attention of the University of

Oxford', started awkwardly when Egerton admitted he would never have gotten the job had another viable candidate, Edward Payne, not drowned in the Wendover Canal the year before. He later shied from examining for the history school, saying his general historical knowledge was too limited.[83]

The divergence between Egerton and the empire-minded who had created the Beit Chair only increased in coming years. Unfortunately for Egerton, he chose the moment of his election, late 1905, to issue a new edition of his celebrated book, complete with epilogue blasting Chamberlain's tariff campaign as 'dangerous':

> Already questions of deep Imperial concern are being plunged into the maelström of British party politics. Already the British working classes are being thought to think that their interests and those of their kin overseas are in conflict. Already, according to some, the step forward we had all made has again been lost… But… there is still room for hope. It was not by the enterprise or wisdom of statesmen or politicians that the Empire was won, and more will be required than the janglings of statesmen and politicians for it to be lost.[84]

Unlike Seeley, who became increasingly political as he contemplated the history of the empire, Egerton backpedaled and entered the Beit Chair advocating a divorce between policy controversy and imperialism—which he tried to redefine as pride in a common history and loyalty to a king. His inaugural lecture, while less vehement than his outburst against Chamberlain, continued to maintain that history could only teach moderation, rarely innovation, and certainly no radical change to the configuration of Great Britain or the colonies.

While there is no evidence that Amery or Milner took direct interest in Egerton's career after the appointment—they engrossed themselves in that 'maelstrom of British party politics' from the 1906 election onward—the professor's anti-political stance and general diffidence won him few peer supporters within Oxford. Egerton retreated into the background, apologizing for his failure to attract a wide audience for colonial history, while still expressing frustration at having been sent on a fool's errand when no real demand existed.[85] Later appraisals confirmed Egerton's fate. The Master of Balliol and erstwhile competitor for the first Beit professorship, historian A. L. Smith, consoled Egerton upon the latter's retirement in

1920. 'All recognize the high quality of your written work, and all have at least heard of your unceasing and unsparing kindness to individual students…. You cannot and you must not undervalue what you have done'.[86] A *Times* obituary sympathized: 'The first Beit Professor's task was not an easy one… even if Egerton had been a brilliant lecturer… he would still have found it difficult, if not impossible, to fill his lecture-room'.[87] It was a fair reflection, for the early days of colonial history at Oxford were not marred merely by a faltering professor. The subject, at that point, existed in fraught relation with constitutional history. Giving Egerton the floor: 'the main difficulty in the way of Colonial History, as part of the general curriculum of the History School, lies in the great mass of material with which students have to deal for the purposes of the examination…. Hitherto natural piety towards Stubbs' "Select Charters" has barred the way to any such vision of Constitutional Documents as would render easier the study of Colonial Constitutions'.[88] In response to this problem, Egerton tried his hand at introducing such a vision in 1911, by way of a compilation titled *Federations and Unions in the British Empire*, which received only limited attention.[89] The few Oxford students who did venture into colonial history in this early phase did so for specialist knowledge, it seems, and not as converts to the cause of Greater Britain.[90]

Toward Rebirth

The Beit program, in its first incarnation, fell victim to institutional currents, disconnects in outlook, and student apathy. Yet major transformations lay ahead. By 1912, imperial studies at Oxford were intensely politically engaged. The main engine of change was the Round Table, the 'brains trust' and sometime lobbying group which in 1910 crystallized out of Milner's Kindergarten. Almost to a man, they wrestled with the problem of divining the best mechanism for uniting the community of white Greater Britain. A few, like Amery, looked to fiscal union, but most, such as the 'Prophet', Lionel Curtis, to constitutional means. As an undergraduate at New College, Curtis had been inspired by the Christian socialism of F. D. Maurice against a backdrop of idealist reform movements. After taking a third in classics, Curtis had set off for service in the Boer War, becoming a trusted Milnerite administrator in Johannesburg, and maintaining active involvement in Rhodes Trust-sponsored political research and lobbying during the years leading up to South African union. It was Curtis who was

called to serve as Beit Lecturer under Egerton after the retirement of W. L. Grant in 1912, at the invitation of a Beit Trust committee, headed by Firth, looking to reinvigorate the program. Curtis's ardor made an impression: Egerton recalled feeling 'like a country rector with the Prophet Isaiah as his curate'.[91] He held the position for one year before retiring to pursue other projects such as the Ralegh Club and the Round Table, but vacated only after handpicking Reginald Coupland, another New College classicist, to succeed him in the position.

Like Amery, Curtis was interested in remaking the very fabric of imperial ties by confronting fundamental political problems that Egerton, for example, remained so loath to touch. Around the time Curtis took on the lectureship, his researches on the prospects of imperial unity led him to identify the triangular relationship between the 'Dominions', the imperial state, and dependent populations. Here was the basic yet hitherto neglected problem of modern imperialism, Curtis believed. His election to even the minor post of lecturer signaled a shift in the direction of 'colonial' studies at Oxford, away from Egerton's mistrust of political debate, and toward confrontation with the premises of two-empire theory.[92]

Egerton would remain indirectly involved in such issues at the intersection of policy and academia as a member of the Royal Colonial Institute and the wartime Imperial Relations Committee. Sitting on the latter, he argued in favor of barring India from any Imperial parliament which might be set up as a result of the war, insisting that only Great Britain and Dominions might speak as 'Trustees for the people of India for the present system under which Great Britain acts alone'.[93] Egerton resigned the Beit Chair in 1920; Coupland replaced him. Egerton went on to contribute a chapter on the Atlantic world before the American Revolution to the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*. He died in 1927 before correcting proofs.[94]

Egerton's textbook adherence to an exclusionary model of empire reflected the centrality of emigration and racial identity to late-Victorian and Edwardian generations. But Edwardian crisis demanded a new approach. When Curtis took up the Beit Lectureship in 1912, he and others brought the dependencies and India into the ambit of colonial history, effectively making that history imperial. At the same time, they bound the moving parts of empire in a fatal embrace. The ideals of settler citizenship which had taken root in the first decade of the twentieth century profoundly skewed most significant metropolitan attempts to envisage

meaningful political change for subject populations. Chapters 6 and 7 will explore the ways in which settlerism stifled discussion of a more capacious imperial arrangement in the war and interwar years. Chapter 5, meanwhile, provides the crucial background to that discussion, examining how the ordeal of Edwardian politics exacerbated debates about the historical nature of Britain's empire. As fiscal and defense controversies dragged on, and rival thinkers appealed to history and the emerging social sciences to contest the most divisive issues of the day, British debates increasingly reflected a political theory emphasizing Greater British reciprocity, welfare, and civic idealism, at the expense of the wider empire cast outside of imperial politics. The politics of incommensurability and deferral, in turn, drew fire from excluded groups, and provided crucial references for anti-colonial protest.

Notes

1. E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Ideology and Economics of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London: Routledge, 1997); Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperialism 1895–1914* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880–1932* (London, 2000).
2. See Chap. 3.
3. In the case of Egypt, A. G. Hopkins has argued that British intervention stemmed from metropolitan financial and commercial interests, using the Egyptian case to develop his, and Peter Cain's, model of the imperialism of 'gentlemanly capitalism'. It sets a frame for considering Milner's own claims at the time—that England intervened merely to 'restore order' and because of its 'special aptitude' in guiding 'more backward nations'—not as official obfuscation, but as a formulation of Milner's statist and reformist beliefs applied early on to the international and imperial realm. Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882', *Journal of African History*, 27:2 (1986), 363–391. Hopkins cites Milner, *England in Egypt* (London, 5th ed., 1894), 15–16, 385, 416–426. See also P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993).
4. Freeman, 'Oxford after Forty Years: II', *The Contemporary Review*, 51 (June 1887), 814–830; J. A. Froude, 'Inaugural Lecture', 145–161.
5. Froude, 'Inaugural Lecture'.
6. W. J. Mander, *British Idealism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–8.

7. Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 251, 259–260; Gerard M. Koot, *English Historical Economics, 1870–1926* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5–9; Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past*, 53.
8. See Chap. 4. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 84–87; Alon Kadish, *Historians, Economists and Economic History* (London: Routledge, 1989), 58–61. Kadish quotes the *Oxford Magazine*, 27 February 1889.
9. Alfred Milner, 'Arnold Toynbee', *The Academy and Literature*, 568:24 (March 1883), 205.
10. Alfred Milner to Benjamin Jowett, 2 February 1882 and Philip Lyttelton Gell to Jowett, 2 February 1882, Jowett papers, Jowett I.E.5, Balliol College, Oxford.
11. On the other hand, Milner applauded the policies of Hartington, Fisher, and Balfour. Alfred Milner to Henry Birchenough, 12 March 1889, Milner papers, MS Milner 26, f. 168, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
12. Milner to Birchenough, 10 January 1890, Milner papers, MS Milner, ff. 273–275.
13. Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt* (London: Edward Arnold, 1892), 437-38.
14. Milner's 'experiment' also marked the reclamation of the concept from much-beleaguered, early-century abolitionist political economy. Milner, *England in Egypt*, 4–7, 9, 409; Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor Versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
15. Alfred Milner to Sidney Low, 28 February 1897, Milner papers, MS Milner 32, f. 20.
16. Eric Stokes, 'Milnerism', *Historical Journal*, 5:1 (March 1962), 49–56. Stokes cites Milner, 1882 lectures on Toynbee, reprinted in *The National Review*, 96 (January-June 1931), 37, 487, 642. See also Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, on the family relationship between radical conservatism and socialism as it emerged in Edwardian Britain.
17. Stokes, 'Milnerism.
18. Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of 'South Africanism', 1902–1910', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (Spring 1997), 55–57, 77–78. Dubow cites Cecil Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers, vol. II* (London: Cassell and Company, 1933), 501.
19. Stokes, 'Milnerism', 59. Stokes cites Milner to Gell, 22 Mar. 1899; Gell MSS., vol. 1. Photocopies in the Archives, Union Building, Pretoria.
20. See the conclusion of Chap. 1. J. R. Tanner to Oscar Browning, 31 May 1895, Browning papers, OB/1/607A.

21. The first Beit Professor, Hugh Egerton, would later proclaim in 1910 that 'Every school building is a citadel of Empire and every teacher its sentinel'. Quoted in Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 47, 53.
22. Cecil Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes, with Elucidatory Notes to Which Are Added Some Chapters Describing the Political and Religious Ideas of the Testator*, ed. W. T. Stead (London: 'Review of Reviews' Office, 1902), 23–27. For discussions of the development of Rhodes's will and the thinking that informed it, see Colin Newbury, 'Cecil Rhodes and the South African Connection: 'A Great Imperial University'? in Madden and Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, 75–96; Philip Ziegler, *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships* (New Haven, CT, 2008), esp. 1-43.
23. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism*; Andrew S. Thompson, 'Imperial Ideology in Edwardian Britain', esp. 14, Frank Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption and Civil Society in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
24. L. S. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I: England Before the Storm* (London: Hutchinson, 1953), 183.
25. Amery, *My Political Life*, 253.
26. As he wrote to Milner, 'I see a dim vision of the Empire run as far as policy goes by a great council (not great in numbers) representing purely thinking and intelligence departments (commercial and diplomatic as well as military intelligence), in which as far as administration was concerned each part remains self-governing as before—the underlying principle of the Prussian general staff system being applied to the whole of Imperial policy'. Amery to Milner, 20 February 1903, quoted in Julian Amery, ed., *The Leo Amery Diaries, Vol. 1: 1896–1929* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 44; Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I*, 194–195.
27. L. S. Amery, ed., *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902*, 7 vols. (London: S. Low, Marston and Co., 1899–1909).
28. While the club brought together diverse thinkers in a united rejection of individualism to discuss collectivist approaches to 'national efficiency', it soon foundered on the issue of tariff reform. Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 162, 181–182; Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*; G. R. Searle, *Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thoughts, 1899–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) and '"National Efficiency" and the "Lessons" of the War' in Thompson and Omissi, eds., *The Impact of the South African War*, 194–213. Green cites Garvin, 'The Principles of Constructive Economics as Applied to the Maintenance of Empire', *Compatriots' Club Lectures: First Series* (London, 1905), 54.
29. Amery was a central figure in clubs and brotherhoods, some such as the Confederates so extreme that they aimed to root Free Traders out of the

Unionist Party. L. S. Amery, *My Political Life* and *Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade: Four Addresses on the Logical Groundwork of the Free Trade Theory* (London: Love and Malcomson, 1905); Wm. Roger Louis, *'In the Name of God, Go!': Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 19–21; Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism*.

30. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I*, 194-5
31. Amery, *My Political Life*, 183–185.
32. Amery, *My Political Life*, 195–196.
33. Amery to Lyttelton, 30 August 1904, AMEL 2/5/3, Amery papers.
34. See Chap. 2. Andrew S. Thompson and Gary Magee, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Good and Capital in the British World, c. 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 2010), 72–73; Robert Huttenback, 'No Strangers Within the Gates': Attitudes and Policies Towards the Non-White Residents of the British Empire of Settlement', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1 (1972), 271–302; Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880–1932* (London: Longman, 2000), 34–45; Pat Thane, 'The British National State and the Construction of National Identities' in Billie Melman, ed., *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 35–38.
35. Saul Dubow, 'Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction' in Thompson and Omissi, eds., *The Impact of the South African War*, 76–80 and 'Colonial Nationalism', 53–86.
36. Kevin Grant, *A Civilized Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884–1926* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 79–107.
37. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I*, 242.
38. The Professors' Manifesto, and the division between historical economists and inductive, free-trade economists over the question of empire trade policy, will be discussed in the next chapter.
39. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume I*, 183–185.
40. Harris, then MP for Tynemouth, Northumberland, sat on Chamberlain's Tariff Commission after 1904, and on the London County Council from 1907 to 1910. During the First World War, he was appointed to the Privy Council, and served as head of the Restriction of Enemy Supplies Department under the Foreign Office before becoming under-secretary to the Ministry of Blockade between December 1916 and January 1919. H. S. Ede, rev. Mark Brodie, 'Harris, (Frederick) Leverton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33723.
41. F. Leverton Harris, 'The Need for National Indemnity', *Times*, 12 September 1905.

42. This was Amery's appraisal. Amery, *My Political Life*, 183.
43. Beit was resident in South Africa for most of the final years of his life, making trips to London for meetings of the Trustees. Anthony Kenny, 'The Rhodes Trust and Its Administration' in Kenny, ed., *The History of the Rhodes Trust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.
44. Per letters on 'political expenditure', esp. Bourchier Hawksley to Lewis Michell, [1903], and unsigned Photostat [Michell to Jameson, 1903], RT/1039, Rhodes Trust papers, Rhodes House, Oxford. After Beit's death in 1906, a special political fund was set up from the revenue of 26,667 De Beers shares, which supported missions like that of Lionel Curtis in 1908 to investigate firsthand the operation of 'responsible government' and promote pro-British federation in South Africa. For an overview of the work of the Rhodes-Beit Shares Fund, see Newbury, 'Cecil Rhodes and the South African Connection', 87 and Kenny, 'The Rhodes Trust and Its Administration', 6-10.
45. Amery, *My Political Life*, 184–185.
46. Reba Soffer, 'Nation, Duty, Character and Confidence: Modern History at Oxford, 1850–1914', *Historical Journal*, 30:1 (March 1987), 77–81, 94–95; C. H. Firth, *A Plea for the Historical Teaching of History: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on November 9, 1904* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).
47. Copy of Amery to Beit, n.d. [June 1904], Amery Papers, AMEL/2/5/3/1, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.
48. Amery to Beit, n.d. [June 1904].
49. Soffer, 'Modern History at Oxford', 77–81, 90–91; Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 27–30, 41 and 'Oxford and India' in Madden and Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, 61–62; Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation*; Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, 24–54.
50. On forms of constitutional history which gave rise to an interpretive historical method and academic profession linking constitutional questions to social preservation and state consolidation, see Anthony Brundage and Richard A. Cosgrove, *The Great Tradition: Constitutional History and National Identity in Britain and the United States, 1870–1960*, esp. 2–4, 63–84.
51. This turn will be discussed at length in Chap. 5.
52. Firth broadcast his views to the university and the History School in his inaugural, *A Plea for the Historical Teaching of History*; and later, 'On the Desirability of Diminishing the Work Set for the Modern History School and in Particular the Amount of Early Constitutional History', (Oxford, 1909) in G. N. Clark papers, MS Clark 240, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts. On the acrimony that Firth's efforts evoked, see Firth to Hodgkin, 14 November 1904, in A. L. Smith papers, IV A 2i, Balliol College, Oxford; and Soffer, 'Modern History at Oxford', 94-5.

53. Firth did, however, think the colonial theme might easily slide under the rubric of modern political history. Firth to Amery, 20 June 1904, AMEL/2/5/3.
54. To Amery's proposal for 'British Colonial history', Beit replied: 'I am much impressed with your scheme, and agree with you as to the need of some definite provision for the teaching of Imperial History at Oxford…'. Beit to Amery, 18 June 1904, AMEL 2/5/3.
55. Beit to Monro, 27 June 1904.
56. A topic discussed at the end of Chap. 2, and in Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 112–116 and 'Oxford and India', 59–60. One minor exception might be noted in the case of the History Board itself, which later recommended that the new Beit Professor should prepare a volume of colonial Constitutional documents for the special subject, 'provided that the whole amount be approximate to that required for the Indian Special Subject'. Minutes of the History Faculty, 1 December 1906, FA 4/11/1/2, Oxford University Archives.
57. Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006), esp. Chap. 1.
58. Beit to Monro, 27 June 1904; Minutes of the History Faculty, 4 February 1905, FA 4/11/1/2, Oxford University Archives.
59. As Amery suggested, Beit endowed the professorship at a salary of £900 per annum, and the Beit essay prize at £50. A 1907 report by Firth to the Chancellor of Oxford showed the Beit Professor's salary equal to the Chichele Professor of Modern History and higher by £40 than the Regius Professor of Modern History. The Beit Prize was the most lucrative of history prizes, at £50 compared to the Lothian (£40), the Stanhope (£20), and the Gladstone (£10). Firth, 'Memorandum on the Present State of the Study of Modern History and on University Reform in General', enclosed to G. N. Curzon, 16 December 1907, Curzon papers, Mss Eur F112/22B ff. 227-40, Asian and African Studies, British Library, London.
60. See Chap. 2. H. E. Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1897).
61. William Anson to Amery, 2 December 1904, Amery papers, AMEL 2/5/3.
62. C. P. Lucas to Charles Cannan, 27 September 1902, OP872/6477, Oxford University Press Archives; Milner to Fisher, 27 November 1905, Fisher papers.
63. Beit and the university had established this committee in his decree, but he himself renounced involvement in the election. Amery's involvement does

not seem to have been considered, apart from an internal memorandum circulated at All Souls by William Anson, crediting Amery with the genesis of the new chair and encouraging the college to establish a formal connection the program. Beit's solicitor informed the Vice-Chancellor, 'I have struck out the reference to Mr. Beit's nominees on the Electoral Board, as he does not wish to take part in the election, directly or indirectly'. William Anson, 'Memorandum of the Subject of the Special Meeting', [1904], Amery papers, AMEL 2/5/3; Bourchier Hawksley to David Binning Monro, 28 December 1904, WPβ/11/12/1-9, Oxford University Archives.

64. Milner to Fisher, 27 November 1905, Fisher papers.
65. Milner, untitled notes on Beit candidates, [October 1905], Milner papers, MS Milner 32, Oxford University Modern Manuscripts.
66. Lucas, 'Letter from the Chairman of the Committee Covering a Report on the Working of the Office' and 'Memorandum on Emigrants' Information Office'.
67. *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* reached a twelfth edition in 1950. Louis, 'Introduction', 12–13.
68. Milner, untitled notes on Beit candidates, [October 1905], Milner papers, MS Milner 32, Oxford University Modern Manuscripts; letters from George B. Adams, George L. Beer, Edward Channing and Charles Dilke in Correspondence and Papers relating to Elections to University Professorships: Beit Professorship of Colonial History (application of Hugh Edward Egerton only), 1905, UR 12/25/1, Oxford University Archives.
69. Egerton, *Short History*, 13.
70. Egerton, *Short History*, 182–183.
71. Egerton, *Short History*, 384–385.
72. Egerton, *Short History*, 5.
73. Egerton, *Short History*, 7–8.
74. By contrast, he raised the point of India several times in his introduction to the revised edition of Lucas's *Historical Geography—The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies and Their System of Government* (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1903). However, any mention of India entailed the caveat that India was not a colony, and Europeans in India were too miniscule and temporary a minority to be considered colonists. 'It can only be pointed out that, however valuable India may be to Great Britain in point of trade, and whatever advantages the native population may derive from just and systematic rule, yet this great possession has been obtained by force and is held by force, and India has been from first to last purely a conquered dependency'. Egerton, *The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies*, 3.
75. Egerton, *The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies*, 411.

76. Egerton, *The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies*, 274–277, 329–330, 333, 405.
77. Egerton, *The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies.*
78. Correspondence and Papers Relating to Elections to University Professorships: Beit Professorship of Colonial History.
79. Paul A. Kramer, 'Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880–1910', *Journal of American History*, 88:4 (March 2002), 1315–1353.
80. Ashley to Maxse, 19 November 1905, Maxse papers, Maxse Mss. 453, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester UK.
81. Correspondence and Papers relating to Elections to University Professorships: Beit Professorship of Colonial History.
82. Egerton, *Short History*, 233.
83. Egerton, *The Claims of the Study of Colonial History upon the Attention of the University of Oxford: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on April 28, 1906* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), Egerton to A. L. Smith [1918], Smith papers, MS Smith E7, Balliol College Archives, Oxford.
84. Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy*, 2nd edn. (London, 1905), 526–527.
85. Egerton, report on the progress of the Beit Chair, [February 1912], Beit Trust minute book, University of Oxford.
86. Smith to Egerton, 30 September 1920, A. L. Smith papers, MS Smith E7.
87. *Times*, 23 May 1927.
88. Egerton, report on the progress of the Beit Chair, [February 1912], Beit Trust minute book, University of Oxford.
89. H. E. Egerton, *Federations and Unions within the British Empire* (Oxford,: Clarendon Press 1911).
90. The Beit Lecturer who assisted Egerton, W. L. Grant, reported in 1910 that 'It has been to my experience that to lecture on the internal history of a colony is to have a small audience, but that when the subject is linked up with the history of England, the audience increases…. In 1908–1910 twelve [out of a total of fourteen] had the Schools in view; the other two were an Irishman who wished to see if the subject threw any light upon the question of Home Rule, and a Frenchman who wished to learn the secret of British colonial success'. Grant, report of work done during lectureship, 1910, Beit Trust minute book. Also quoted in Deborah Lavin, 'Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth' in Madden and Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, 106.
91. Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 119.
92. See Chap. 5.

93. Egerton is quoted in comments on a draft report of the Imperial Relations Committee, 12 April 19196, II D 1/14ii, A. L. Smith papers.
94. J. Holland Rose, A. P. Newton and E. A. Benians, eds., *The Cambridge History of the British Empire: Volume I: The Old Empire from the Beginnings to 1783* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), vi.

CHAPTER 5

Empire in Opposition: The Stakes of History and the Rise of Anticolonial Nationalism

We return to this book's opening scene: Lionel Curtis watching skies darken over Britain's empire in 1912. Existing approaches to the imperial past were no preparation for the turbulent times ahead. '[The] problem we have taken to study is not one of the problems of history but *the* problem', he announced to Round Table confidante and fellow Kindergarten alumnus Philip Kerr that March. As the main driver of the Round Table, the imperial proto-think tank formed in 1910 from Milner's youthful coterie, Curtis was already embroiled in a vast historical survey of imperial relations. He began from a concern with relations between Britain and the 'Dominions'—as the self-governing settler colonies were formally known following the reorganization of the Colonial Office and creation of a separate Dominions Office in 1907. But by the time he was recruited for the Beit Lectureship in 1912, Curtis had come to believe that the fate of empire was triangular—imperial center to Dominion to dependency, and back again—and depended on the encounter between East and West, Asiatics and Europeans, 'primitive society' and the 'top rung of civilization'. In a year of tremendous controversy over imperial immigration regulation, nationalist agitation, and naval contributions which sorely tested Anglo-Dominion feeling, Curtis pronounced to Kerr: 'England has thus undertaken a vast two-fold mission in which the task of regulating the inevitable effect of European on Asiatic civilisation is not the smallest part'. Only historical study could determine the best course in that seemingly impossible task: whether the empire as a whole should reform migration policies, or whether England could or should carry the burden of alien rule

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without the input of its so-called daughter states. On these issues, Curtis declared, hung the future of Britain's empire and the world.[1]

Meanwhile, that other Oxford man was coming to similar conclusions. Eight months after Curtis declared his embrace of a holistic, integrative imperial history, historian and prominent journalist Sidney Low stood before the British Academy and delivered his recommendations on 'The Organization of Imperial Studies in London'. 'By Imperial study, then', he informed the British Academy in November 1912, 'I mean principally that of the discovery, the acquisition, the development and the institutions of the British Dominions and Dependencies. I include those territories which are inhabited by subject races under British control, as well as those which are colonies or self-governing communities'.[2] It was a plea to put the British Empire back together, anew.

Low's insistence on studying all parts of empire side by side stemmed from his own experience of the strife and attrition that had paralyzed Edwardian imperial politics, and his belief that the handlers of imperial history to date had run the study of Greater Britain into irrelevance. Low had graduated in 1879 with one of the first cohorts to study modern history as a degree subject at Oxford. He was a contemporary of Milner at Balliol, and senior to Curtis and Kerr by about fifteen years. Leaving Oxford a trained constitutional historian, Low transferred his efforts to journalism in 1883. But to Low's chagrin, his professional fortunes were determined by political conflict and the shifting boundaries between journalism, policy, and scholarship. A Tory committed to Free Trade, Low's intended rise at *The Standard* at the turn of the century was checked by the almighty 'fiscal question' when Arthur Pearson, an uncompromising tariff reformer, bought the paper in 1904. Low found himself in the wilderness—or more accurately, in India, as Pearson and H. A. Gwynne shoved Low out to follow the Prince of Wales's tour in 1905.[3] Although it was agreed Low could stay on staff, his three-year renewal contract included the 'curious proviso' that he could write on general and foreign issues but emphatically not domestic party politics even though it was his main realm of expertise.[4]

Low's trip to India was by no means a failure. It produced the most successful work of his career, *Vision of India*, in which he sought to capture the essence of 'our vast and varied dominion of the East—almost a world in itself … in its splendor and its contradictions, its colour and its mystery, its wealth and poverty, its medley of classes, creeds and peoples…'.[5] But it was not enough to give Low a foothold back home. Pearson peremptorily

dismissed him from the staff of the *Standard* in 1908,[6] and when Low set his sights on replacing Tory lightning rod Fabian Ware as managing editor of the *Morning Post*, the *Post*'s proprietor, Lady Bathurst, refused to consider his candidacy given his well-known free trade views.[7] And so, forced out of domestic imperial politics by his fiscal beliefs,[8] Low maneuvered in 1912 to carve out what he saw as a more fitting place at the intersection of domestic journalism, scholarship, and imperial politics.

In addressing the British Academy, Low barely veiled his distaste for the direction in which party strife and fiscal myopia had steered imperial studies. Low singled out the Beit Chair as exemplifying the distorted, even dangerous, trajectory of the field:

> I hope it [the Beit Chair] will not be regarded as a precedent. If we are to establish a school, a faculty, or a professorship of Imperial Studies in London we ought not to exclude the history of the British in India. We cannot omit from our consideration of the dynamics of Empire the processes by which Englishmen have become responsible for the government of a fifth of the population of this planet. Our Imperial studies will embrace India under the Company and under the rule of the Crown, as they will embrace the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Union of South Africa, the Protectorate of British East Africa, the Crown Colony of Nigeria, the island-groups of the West Indies, and the relations of the Crown, the legislature, the government, the statesmen, the electorate, and the people, of Britain to them all.[9]

After his own eight years' banishment from domestic politics, Low's insistence on studying the self-governing and authoritarian parts of empire side by side was a thinly veiled jab at tariff reform zealots, made further clear by Low's ensuing protests against including Amery on the new Imperial Studies Committee. '[Amery] is a strong party politician, & his presence on the first committee might cause some people to look askance at our whole scheme under the ideas that it is connected in some way with Tariff Reform & Conservative politics'.[10] For similar reasons, Low balked at the prospect of designating a King's College London lectureship for 'Imperial History and Politics'. 'I am even doubtful to whether it is desirable to call it a "Rhodes" lectureship. "Lecturer on the History & Institutions of the British Empire" would I think be the best title. Otherwise the present title "Lect. on Imp & Col. Hist". will do very well'.[11] Low shied from invoking a name associated with tariff-reforming and pro-settler lobbies in his project of intended renewal. The inclusion of

India and the dependencies in imperial studies might signal the final defeat of the radical Tory vision and, in turn, Low hoped, his validation in academic and wider public spheres.

Low, like Curtis, insisted that imperial studies include India and dependencies. Both men operated at the intersection of academic history, journalism, and political theory, and in 1912, sought to draw the territories of non-white, authoritarian rule into the purview of an institutional history hitherto built for the white settler colonies. And both of their campaigns had real institutional effects. Curtis's efforts revitalized the moribund Beit program at Oxford and provided a focus for the emerging Round Table movement. Low's crusade brought together a committee of notables to debate the changing face of imperial knowledge and eventually secured the founding of the Rhodes Professorship of Imperial History at King's College London in 1919. Yet their efforts bore mixed results. Both men were products of Edwardian political conflict. Both redefined imperial knowledge so as to overcome party strife. But while Curtis and Low's proposals demonstrated a growing impulse to bring dependent populations into the scale of settler historical time, the trajectories of their projects also revealed the uneven and volatile effects of the First World War on the organization of knowledge and the role of historical expertise in British public life. Historians spoke for Britain, for empire, for civilization; imperial theorists sought to use history to illuminate new lines of policy for a now undeniably diverse empire. Yet beneath it all lurked the inexorable influence of settlerism, infecting even the most capacious attempts to give an empire with history a future after the war. Those problems will be the focus of Chap. 7.

This chapter picks up where the last left off, contemplating the ideological war that convulsed Edwardian imperial politics and produced self-perceived moral sentinels and historical innovators, such as Curtis and Low, by 1912. It examines the tenets of a settler-citizen ideology, sharpened and reinforced as shared touchstones by acrimonious political debate. It ends by explaining why a new appetite for studying the non-white empire preceded the First World War. In doing so, it also begins to explain why the politics behind 'colonial' history fomented disenchantment among excluded populations and gave rise to anticolonial rebuttal. Asian aspirations and upheavals appeared increasingly ominous to British planners during these years. Indian and African nationalisms produced newly organized campaigns that demanded the reform not only of British rule but of Dominion-dependency relations and the discriminatory migration and

labor structures that characterized the vaster imperial system. Those ultimatums reflected and were exacerbated by Dominion intransigence on questions of race and 'Asiatic' immigration—an impasse that stood out to thinkers such as Curtis as the most momentous dilemma of the day. These confrontations consistently invoked historical language and themes. An existing framework of settler-world history, however, underpinned stunted metropolitan responses to demands for political inclusion and equality of subjecthood.

'The Spirit Purified by Misfortune'

Low and Curtis's efforts to bring the non-white empire—back—into imperial history must be understood in the context of the events and ideas of the preceding decade. The years between 1903 and 1914 were marked by doubt, crisis, and near-fratricide in British political, academic, and journalistic life. Edwardian battles over tariff reform and imperial unity imbued the study of 'colonial' history with a new reservoir of meaning. In recounting the creation of the Beit Chair, the previous chapter only touched on the wider scene in which British political society grew locked in debates over the meaning of the past and contours of the future, with diffuse enthusiasms for settler empire breaking into competing political economic faiths.

The year that Hugh Egerton took up the Beit Chair, 1906, was particularly punishing for British imperialists affiliated with Chamberlain and Milner.[12] The Unionist party, divided then for almost three years on the question of tariff reform, was swept out of office in January. Chamberlain, still the object of dwindling Unionist hopes for imperial deliverance, was removed from politics by a paralytic stroke in July. Figures associated with Milner's work in South Africa found themselves in the wilderness; Alfred Lyttelton lost his seat and the Colonial Secretaryship in the backlash over the importation of Asian labor to the Transvaal. Unionists, Liberal Unionists, Liberal Imperialists: all fell to arguing over the very definition and purpose of their nominally shared creed. As the year closed, John Buchan—like Amery, a hovering member of Milner's former circle in South Africa, and a Liberal Unionist—sent Lyttelton a small token of commiseration: an anonymous novella wherein Buchan wove a didactic portrait of the confusions and conflicts riddling the community of those who would call themselves imperialists. It was 'an attempt to discuss on all sides some of the root questions in Imperialism…. most of the characters

have a suspicious resemblance to real people…. it enabled me to say a lot of things I have long been wanting to say'.[13]

Buchan invoked the present crisis: 'the creed which is commonly called Imperialism was tossed down into the arena of politics to be wrangled over by parties and grossly mauled in the quarrel'.[14] Into this turmoil sailed an imaginary protagonist, Francis Carey—to some 'the most patriotic of millionaires', to others 'the richest of patriots', who viewed the political wreckage with 'philosophic calm. He trusted the instincts of his race, and was not sorry that the dross should be purged and the spirit purified by misfortune'.[15] This imagined paragon of equanimity, possessed by confidence that imperial Britain would emerge stronger than ever from its trial, was none other than a more resplendent version of Cecil Rhodes. But whereas Rhodes had died in 1902, simultaneously revered and reviled, Buchan imagined Carey 'accepted as a kind of national providence', where his 'Imperialism' was a 'faith… a creed beyond parties, a consuming and passionate interest in the destiny of his people'. His influence drew Britain tight to its outlying world; his 'amazing energy annihilated space'. A 'vast scheme of education, inaugurated by him, tied the schools of the Colonies to the older institutions of England. One ancient university owed the renewal of her fortunes to his gifts'. And, 'at his own cost he yearly relieved the congestion of great cities by planting settlements in new lands'.[16] This was the figure who epitomized what many in Milner's cohort had wished from the all-too-mortal Rhodes—a philosopher king and successful philanthropist who gathered together his most intelligent friends to discuss the metaphysics of empire at his remote East African home.

Among the novel's cast was Carey's business partner, financier Eric Lowenstein, or a thinly disguised Alfred Beit. Buchan's imagined Beit spoke eloquently of overcoming the taint of jingoism:

> Our difficulty as Imperialists has always been that, though the common people may hear us gladly, the elect will shrug their shoulders and turn away. We are in danger of making Imperialism purely what Mr Wakefield called 'a business proposition', and therefore of identifying it with an arid, mercantile view of life…. I almost think that our most urgent duty is to insist upon the spiritual renaissance at the back of everything. For, properly regarded, our creed is a religion, and we must hold it with the fervour of a convert.[17]

The real Beit had been such a convert, a German Jewish diamond magnate who moved into London circles and then into Rhodes's heady mix of

South African politics, patronage, strategic finance, and imperial theology. His breakneck support for Amery's plan to bring colonial history to Oxford in 1904 bore the same logic that Buchan idealized in *A Lodge in the Wilderness*: the colonies were to be linked to Britain through educational schemes, and Britain's stagnant universities revived to train a new generation for the responsibilities of distributing Anglo-Saxon populations most profitably throughout the world. But as Chap. 4 described, the Beit Chair scheme proved but a rustling in the political tempest that set Buchan musing. By 1906, both Rhodes and Beit were dead, and two mortally opposed creeds competed for their mantle.

'But to Business': Tariff Reform and Settler-Imperial History

Leo Amery approached Alfred Beit with his proposal for a professorship focusing on the history of Britain's settler empire in the same year he became a fervent controversialist in the tariff reform debate. He relished the turn. 'What is your mood since the auto-castration of the Unionist party?' he goaded Leo Maxse, editor of *The National Review*, in September 1903. 'My own theory is that when Joe laid down his plans before the last cabinet there was such a terrified unloosening of palsied old bladders over the chairs and floor of Downing St. that Joe promptly fled to Highbury [and] resolved to cut adrift without delay. But to business—' Amery crowed, 'what can we stalwarts do? … Can't we get together a small band to do some booing, & to interrupt AJB with lewd remarks about the state of the floor in 10 Downing St'.[18]

Amery was a man on fire, a fellow of All Souls, a lawyer, a journalist, an aspiring parliamentarian, and a military historian who, after 1903, saw in all his pursuits the chance to advocate ferociously for a fiscally bounded, militarily reformed imperial state. His fervor tended to prompt astonishment and concern. 'I don't think you are right', Buchan told Amery in July 1903. 'I feel that the whole [tariff] business complicates and confuses the question of Federation. My only hope is that when Joe is beaten in the country, he may have gotten us towards some coherent policy: & we may go back in two years' time with Federation as an infallible party policy'.[19] Confronting these challenges, and convinced that the future of the British Empire lay in his success, Amery pursued his campaign on multiple fronts. The last chapter looked at one such project, the Beit Chair. But Amery's

career and activism mapped onto, indeed became emblematic of, a wider Edwardian intellectual watershed.

Between 1903 and approximately 1910, settler-imperialist ideology morphed in response to contemporary political pressures in two distinct and enduring ways. First, 'constructive' campaigns for closer union with the white empire grew further and irreversibly synonymous with the consolidation of a strong, homogeneous, exclusionary state. Second, the notion of historical gradation, locating different peoples in different times, gained a boost from the field of historical economics. Its practitioners argued, contrary to the Marshallian universalist view, that economic activity was and had always been specific to a time, a place, and implicitly, a people. Along these lines, historical economics handily provided a springboard for controversialists who sought to draw a fiscal barrier around Britain and Dominions, with the position of India and the dependencies remaining uncomfortably vague.

These trends permeated the conversations and major intellectual trends that defined Edwardian public life, such as the work of the Co-Efficients Club and the early development of the London School of Economics. Later sections will touch upon those topics. This section will consider why and how the tariff reform movement, headlined by Amery, intensified the association between historical Greater Britain and a new model of citizenship built almost exclusively for Anglo-Saxons.

Amery was explicit in drawing a line from tariff-reforming, pro-settler imperialism to an idealist philosophy of the state. 'We shall arrive at no constructive work', he insisted, 'until we have armed ourselves with a strong constructive theory'. Such a move entailed 'expos[ing] the fundamental fallacies on which our opponents' arguments are based' and, indeed, breaking the very spell that universalist language and aspirations continued to hold over protectionists and preferentialists. 'Even our most distinguished orators go out of their way to pay lip-service to the theory of Free Trade. They declare Free Trade to be ideally desirable, though perhaps impracticable in the present; they profess a vague aspiration for universal Free Trade', Amery complained. 'That to my mind is a fatal attitude'.[20] The salvation of the British Empire depended on the recognition of a differentiated and often hostile world unfit for open exchange. History, again, mattered. Amery followed his hero Joseph Chamberlain in arguing that whatever had led Britain to a policy of free trade in 1846, the competitive conditions prevailing at the opening of the twentieth century —namely, the specter of a unified and industrially dynamic Germany and

United States—necessitated a sharp break with the past sixty years. To convince Britain of this fact, Amery, Chamberlain, and fellow tariff reformers demanded a long, hard look at patterns behind the rise and fall of states, the progress of economic societies, and the very development of national and imperial morality.

Free traders also marshaled historical interpretations to support their imperial and commercial policies. Scholars such as Frank Trentmann and Anthony Howe have recreated the salient contours of the free trade movement, stemming largely from a fundamental belief in the universally civilizing power of open commerce.[21] The historical orientation of the protectionist argument, however, has received less attention. Indeed, the energy of the rhetorical wars stemmed largely from tariff reformers' attempt to reconstruct the history and morality of the British nation and empire. Amery, for example, was ruthless in his attack on what he called 'Free Trade psychology and Free Trade history' as 'based on unsound logic, on false verbal analogies, and on an entire misconception of human society and of the nature of man, and on a complete disregard of the teachings of history'. The first and most essential project was for tariff reformers to retake ownership of 'science', 'logic', and 'facts'.[22]

Both tariff reformers and free traders were predominantly interested in strengthening Britain's relations with self-governing colonies, or Dominions, as they were known after 1907. Because of this shared goal, not in spite of it, their disagreements produced an ultimately spectacular clash around opposed conceptions of the state. Contrary to those he saw as starry-eyed liberals, Amery contended that the 'whole lesson of history' was that 'Man has progressed, not by being left to his own enlightened self interest, but by the compulsion and interference of his fellow men'. Communities—not individuals—made history, a 'vital fact' that free traders ignored.[23] Second, Amery argued that there was no such thing as the universal individual. 'Economic man' was a fallacy; and if 'the orthodox school' sought to analyze history and economics 'from the point of view of the actor in the process himself', it would make a mockery of the complexity of history. Different societies and different civilizations produced different individuals. Amery hailed the thought of Carlyle, Ruskin, T. H. Green, and Bernard Bosanquet, but warned that moral and aesthetic theory was insufficient in the battle against free trade. Free traders celebrated the civic virtue of the individual consumer as promoting national wealth and welfare at the domestic level, and the leadership of Britain's cosmopolitan policies on an international stage.[24] The tariff reform camp,

then, had to show that different economies made different individuals, and that the state, properly conceived, should regulate national economic life to encourage the most innovative and noble aspects of individual nature.[25]

Amery's idealized 'community' was the self-governing white empire. In November 1906, he wrote to Milner, 'If we are imperialists, we must look at the Empire as a single state, separate in some sense from the rest of the world. That separation ought to be shown in economics as in everything else'.[26] Within that separate empire, Amery pursued further distinctions, following on his belief that market boundaries should mirror differentiation and divisions between the peoples. In May 1908, he wrote to Australian Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, 'What we do want to get at is a common principle between all parts of the Empire on this question of migration within the Empire of British subjects of Asiatic race. To my mind it can only be done by putting it frankly on the ground of racial economic competition and admitting the right of racial exclusion for economic purposes on the same footing as the right of framing a tariff'.[27] By 1913, Amery's economic and racial models interlocked. Speaking on 'The twin empires' in Melbourne, he explained that the 'great political complex… we call the British Empire, consists, broadly speaking, of two Empires or two Imperial systems differing very widely in many obvious features & having very little direct connexion or even contact with each other. … The principle of cohesion in the [Dominions] is the essential unity of race + institutions. The principle of cohesion in the other [subject empire] could seem to be nothing more than administrative and military control'. A 'clear recognition of the distinction between them is an essential pre-requisite to any dealing with imperial problems', he said. The self-governing empire might rally to the task of governing alien populations, but beyond that point it was impossible to envision any meaningful exchange.[28]

Happy Warriors: Edwardian Historical Economists and the Terms of Human Difference

Amery made history an essential part of his political crusade. He also stood at the edge of a wider intellectual movement: historical economics. Historical economists fought hard to establish human differentiation as a precursor to historical analysis. The field emerged with an eye to statistical analysis but engaged mainly in pointed interventions in the methodology

of economic history. Its clash with the co-emergent neoclassical or Marshallian school figured centrally in the development of the economic and historical professions in Britain in the early twentieth century, and intensified a set of preoccupations—namely with medieval and Tudor history, and mercantilism—that continued to inflect historical study well past the Edwardian years. The most prominent historical economists were W. A. S. Hewins, William Ashley, and, in a somewhat separate orbit, William Cunningham. Hewins was an Oxford-trained historian who served as the first director of the London School of Economics from 1895 to 1903. Ashley also trained as an Oxford historian and enjoyed a well-respected university career in Canada and the United States before becoming the first professor of commerce at the newly established University of Birmingham in 1901. Cunningham studied moral sciences at Cambridge and became a fixture in historical teaching at the university. He also served as Tooke Professor of Economics and Statistics at King's College London in the 1890s. Hewins and Ashley bore the deep impression of Oxford idealism and Toynbeean economic history. Cunningham, along with Seeley and his state-oriented ethical approach to history, embodied the closest comparable vein at Cambridge.[29]

Ewen Green and Stefan Collini have lucidly distilled the historical school's late-nineteenth-century formation and outlook. At root, it opposed the 'vulgarized derivatives' of classical economics, 'Manchesterism' and socialism.[30] The critique fell along two lines. First, historical economists deplored the deductive, principle-based method that led the classical and rising neoclassical school to 'isolate certain motives and measure them, and formulate laws according to which those motives act'.[31] Second, historical economists objected to their rivals' practice of abstracting economic concepts and assuming the inevitable progress of commercial activity without regard for specific cultural, political, and social contexts.[32] But opposition was not enough. Historical economists therefore developed an analysis which 'effectively took [economic history] out of its evolutionary frame'. They denied the distinction between local peculiarity and market development. 'All economic activity was, to a greater or lesser extent, customary and, within the limits of these customs, rational'.[33] In this way, the field of historical economics emerged based on the premise of human communal differentiation.

The fiscal imbroglio of 1903, when it erupted, opened a new phase for Hewins, Ashley, and Cunningham as controversialists and institution-builders. Hewins was the most active participant in the tariff controversy and

ultimately the most visible of the historical economists. His career had begun inauspiciously: he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1884 and graduated from Lincoln College with a second in mathematics in 1887. But his inclination toward the social question, and his belief in inductive or case-based investigation, led him to co-found the Oxford *Economic Review* and act as an animating member of the Oxford Economic Society which drew other rising scholars such as Ashley. Hewins hoped to pursue formal economics, but at a mentor's urging he instead took up historical study under Charles Firth, the pugnacious Oxford history tutor who later occupied the Regius Chair.[34] Failing to win a fellowship at Oxford, Hewins scraped by as a teacher for the university extension scheme. A popular lecturer and writer, he continued to build his critique of classical economics. Hewins's 1892 *English trade and finance, chiefly in the seventeenth century* reinvented mercantilism as a positive polemical device,[35] and his state-oriented approach soon recommended itself to Beatrice and Sidney Webb, who in 1895 approached Hewins to head their newly founded London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

Well before 1903, those leading historical economists had etched new interpretations of the Tudor period and mercantilism into the British and Anglo-American historical imagination. While Hewins circulated in London-based policy reform circles, Ashley made a name as a major practitioner of the new economic history on the other side of the Atlantic. Ashley was older than Hewins, having gone up to Balliol in 1878 and graduating with a first in modern history in 1881. He stayed on at Oxford and in the winter of 1881–1882 attended Arnold Toynbee's lectures on industrial revolution. This experience, followed by several visits to Germany and exposure to the German historical economic school, put Ashley on a firmly contextual and inductive track. Beginning in 1888, Ashley held the chair of political economy and constitutional history at the University of Toronto, and from 1892 then a professorship in economic history at Harvard before returning to England and its first professorship in commerce, at Birmingham, in 1901.

Cunningham, meanwhile, was the most radically conservative of the trio, clinging, as one biographer put it, to the belief that 'the essential problem of modern life was the anarchism of the individual will'. Even Ashley and Hewins would criticize his work for its failure to address the evolutionary nature of institutions and unremitting adherence to the 'abstraction of national power'. Cunningham's education took him from his native Edinburgh to Tübingen and, crucially, into the moral sciences tripos

at Cambridge, where he won a scholarship to Trinity College in 1872 and was listed at the top of his subject alongside the legal historian Frederick William Maitland. There, Cunningham embraced the Christian Socialism of F. D. Maurice and the teachings of the Church of England as the ideal vehicle for subordinating the individual will to the will of God and the needs of the community.[36] Cunningham carried Seeley's obsession with the state and national community into historical teaching at Cambridge well past the latter's death in 1894, and was a constant thorn in the side of Alfred Marshall during debates over tripos reform at the turn of the century.[37] His political ethics translated into active support of tariff reform, Unionism, and national service.

Even before the tariff reform controversy, Hewins, Ashley, and Cunningham devoted the bulk of their scholarship to English economic development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[38] The resurrection and reinvention of Tudor and Stuart history was essential to the project of keeping economic science bounded to historical context, of building national identity on the premise of global differentiation, and, more immediately, of sparking a profound imaginative shift among politicians and the British public in favor of state intervention in fiscal policy. Hewins described a seventeenth-century watershed in which the development of British trade revealed a dialectic between merchants and a wise, responsive state.[39] Ashley emphasized the continuity of state morality in economic life: England never outgrew the late-fifteenth-century 'canonist doctrine' which set economic principles on a theological basis, save for a brief and misguided diversion by enthusiasts of Smith and Ricardo in the nineteenth century.[40] Cunningham, meanwhile, consistently praised the strong Tudor state in which monarchy and church together forged a 'National Consciousness'.[41]

With the launch of Chamberlain's fiscal campaign in 1903, these historical economists became the 'house intellectuals' of the tariff reform movement, and their idealization of Tudor and Stuart eras the prototype for fostering national regeneration and imperial unity.[42] Those awed depictions sought to undercut the popular free-trade vision of a prosperous, progressive nineteenth century, using history to reeducate the public.[43] 'We must at all costs get the 19th century well buried', Hewins exulted to Beatrice Webb,

> I am delighted that these issues have been raised. I love these issues: we shall now get on. I can once more quote poetry (a bad symptom) & feel as

> comfortable as Wordsworth's Happy Warrior: Who if he be called upon to face/some awful moment to wh. God [sic] has joined/Great Issues good or bad for humankind/Is happy as a lover & attir'd/With sudden brightness.[44]

The delight, alas, was short-lived. The Webbs remained aloof from the financial debate. Meanwhile, free traders successfully championed the nineteenth century as a time of prosperity made possible by the demise of protection, and dismissed British imperial history before the nineteenth century as an age of exploitation and disintegration. All told, free traders 'won the politics of time'.[45] But tariff reformers fought the current. They invoked both a future in which foreign dumping and competition would ruin Britain, and a history in which the short period after 1846 was an aberration. In their calls for order, national institutions, and notions of duty represented by an earlier age, the theme of mercantilism took on new and concrete political form. Counseling Arthur Balfour on the case for modern protection in relation to trade policies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Hewins dismissed the negative associations surrounding the 'National or Mercantile System' in contemporary debate. Mercantilism in early-modern England had been 'the creation of an industrial and commercial "commonwealth" in which, by encouragement or restraint imposed by the sovereign authority, private and sectional interests should be made to promote national strength and security, to increase employment, and to provide a "plentiful subsistence" for the people'. Its one flaw was that the colonies played a subordinate role in the scheme—a mistake not to be repeated by modern imperialists. In any case, Hewins declared, at least the colonies had played some substantial role in the old 'National' system, as opposed to their place under 'narrow, insular' Cobdenism.[46]

The major feat achieved by the historical economists, in the end, was to link the study of Tudor and Stuart history with concepts of 'virtue, glory and honor' that linked local, national, and imperial developments.[47] With the outbreak of the fiscal controversy, Cunningham threw his efforts into documenting the origin and nature of free trade as a policy of self-interest and international rivalry couched in pious talk. 'Stripped of its moral cant', Victorian free trade had been nothing more than the loosing of greed and disharmony: as Cunningham termed it, 'the "Imperialism of Free Trade"'.[48]

It may seem strange that the most influential Fabian socialists should appoint, as the first director of their new school, a historical economist who would soon enough abandon academia for radical Tory politics. But the connection between Hewins and the Webbs stemmed from concerns

which enveloped Edwardian intelligentsia well beyond the historical economists. Beatrice Webb recalled their 'mutual dislike of the so-called Manchester School, of its unverified inductive reasoning and abstract generalizations… [of] the passionate defence of the rights of property as against the need of humanity. And, secondly, our common faith in… a concrete science of society implemented through historical research, personal observation and statistical verification'.[49] The Co-Efficients Club, as it came together over dinner at the Webbs' in November 1902, briefly enshrined the affinity between Fabians and constructive imperialists along collectivist lines as they confronted issues of national fitness, social ethics, and economic management.[50] But paths diverged. Hewins declared himself fully for the Unionist party at the launch of the tariff reform campaign in the summer of 1903, and left LSE in the autumn to head Chamberlain's Tariff Commission. From November 1903 onward, Hewins sought a purely political role, downplaying his academic background and emphasizing 'practical issues' over scholarship.[51] The Webbs, wary of the taint of crude protectionism, later distanced themselves from Hewins. 'His views', Beatrice wrote, 'sprang from an instinctive sympathy with medievalism which led him spiritually, in the course of a few years, to join the Roman Catholic Church, and politically into a life-long advocacy of a scientific tariff'.[52]

The future did not prove hospitable to academic supporters of Chamberlain. As secretary of the Tariff Commission, Hewins sought to stockpile sufficient information to erect that 'scientific' empire tariff. Yet the electoral reversals of 1906 left Hewins demoralized, and even his intensive preparations for the Colonial Conference of 1907 produced few palpable results. He failed to win nominations to contest parliamentary elections in 1908, 1910, and 1911. Ashley, meanwhile, lost his bid for the Beit Chair of Colonial History at Oxford. He wrote anxiously to Leo Maxse in late 1905, protesting that his claim on the new professorship was superior to that of Hugh Egerton, who had 'no experience as a teacher or administrator', or Balliol's A. L. Smith, who had 'never shown any interest in colonial things'. 'I am told that some of Smith's friends are making much of my agreement with Mr. Chamberlain, and declaring that that ought to be a disqualification for the colonial history chair! Such is Oxford—the odium theologicum now replaced by the odium economicum!'[53] The Beit electors did take note: they designated Ashley as 'Class A', with testimonials including Charles Francis Adams at Harvard and Woodrow Wilson at Princeton. But Ashley's 'un-attractive personality' and his being 'backed by

"Joe"' set the odds in favor of the safer Egerton.[54] Cunningham, for his part, continued to duke it out at Cambridge with Alfred Marshall. Their long-running feud over inductive versus deductive economic teaching took a new turn with Cunningham's attack on Marshall's recommendations for the Economics Tripos in early 1903; the eruption of the tariff controversy soon turned a previously curricular disagreement into a deeply fraught national political issue. Frustrated academically, Cunningham turned to other pulpits denouncing 'the sins of Cobdenism', serving as vicar of Great St. Mary's and then the archdeacon of Ely until his death in 1919.[55]

The Edwardian Crisis: Alternate Histories

The historical economists' emphasis on the state, virtue, and mercantilism shaped Edwardian historical ideas of empire outside the bounds of colonial history proper. In this, they were joined by two major interventions prompted by pro-tariff politics: Halford Mackinder's 'Geopolitical pivot of history' (1904), and Frederick Scott Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton* (1906). Both works, while avoiding the scrum of British history, pointedly challenged prevailing uses of imperial history in politics. Mackinder consolidated a territorial logic of geopolitical competition which demanded fiscal and military union between Britain and Dominions. Oliver, meanwhile, firmly and enduringly introduced the American metaphor into twentieth-century British political debate.

Mackinder succeeded Hewins as the director of LSE in December 1903 at the suggestion of R. B. Haldane, a Liberal Imperialist, and Bernard Shaw, a radical imperialist and Fabian socialist. Mackinder took a geographical and historical approach in favor of collectivist state politics. As an undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford, Mackinder had studied for two honors schools, modern history and natural science, in the early 1880s, before devoting himself to the advancement of geography as a scholarly discipline, first as Reader of Geography at Oxford from 1887 and then as director of the first English school of geography established also at Oxford from 1899.[56] Influenced by German conceptions of the state as an organism whose flourishing required territorial and agricultural growth, Mackinder introduced the notion of 'land-power' to an organic conception of the state and encouraged historical economic dissent against Marshallian orthodoxy in the Edwardian years.[57] Though a Liberal Imperialist before 1903, Mackinder was radicalized by the tariff controversy, 'stung' by the South African war, and 'profoundly alarmed' by German naval and military competition.[58]

Mackinder staked out his foothold in political thought and historical debate with 'The geographical pivot of history', read to the Royal Geographical Society in January 1904. The paper sketched his argument that any state to gain control of the heartland centered in western Russia could dominate the whole of the 'World Island'—Europe, Asia, and Africa. What is often forgotten is that 'The geographical pivot' was a unique dissenting statement. It pitched a loud critique against the progress narrative by then enshrined in the field of modern history, and against that project so central to the historical field's founding practitioners: the establishing of a natural separation between the temporal realm of Western Europe, Britain, North America, and the settler colonies, and that of the remaining world. While Mackinder excused his intervention—'My concern is with the general physical control, rather than the causes of universal history'—his aim was no less than to revise the historical worldview *in toto*. 'The late Prof. Freeman held that the only history which counts is that of the Mediterranean and European races', admitted Mackinder, 'In a sense, of course, that is true, for it is among these races that have originated the ideas which have rendered the inheritors of Greece and Rome dominant throughout the world'. Yet the stakes were higher than merely correcting any self-congratulatory institutional genealogy:

> In another and very important sense… such a limitation has a cramping effect upon thought. The ideas which go to form a nation, as opposed to a mere crowd of human animals, have usually been accepted under the pressure of a common tribulation, and under a common necessity of resistance to external force. … What I may describe as the literary conception of history, by concentrating attention upon ideas and upon the civilization which is their outcome, is apt to lose sight of the more elemental movements whose pressure is commonly the exciting cause of the efforts into which great ideas are nourished.[59]

Without the constant threat of geopolitical competition, Mackinder argued, the modern federal and collectivist state would never have come into being. Moreover, by proposing to describe 'those physical features of the world… most coercive of human action' amidst the ongoing clamor of the tariff war, Mackinder sought to startle complacent peers from a supposedly teleological free-trade outlook. If Britain's, or Anglo-Saxondom's, global dominance was not foreordained by a political god, but merely the temporary product of geographical circumstance, then the matrix structuring British historical belief up to 1903 had been flawed.

Mackinder took other tariff reformers with him. In discussion after the paper, Amery intervened, proclaiming that sea and rail navigation had knit the world as 'a sphere, east and west have only become relative terms', and that interconnection would increase with technological and navigational advance.[60] Amery, taking Mackinder's arguments a step further, looked to the morally and industrially organized state as a bulwark against a diverse and competitive world thrown together by transportation, arms, and communication. This intervention, addressing a holistic theory of global politics, nonetheless reiterated Amery's conviction that Britain and Dominions needed to barricade themselves within a fast-moving and competitive world. By consolidating as an industrial community, such a state would materially and spiritually withstand international challenges. Amery and Mackinder indeed saw eye to eye. Although he stayed on as LSE director through the storms of 1906, Mackinder resigned in 1908 to devote himself to the Unionist tariff campaign.

Like Mackinder's 'Geographical pivot', F. S. Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton* reflected a prevailing concern among proponents of imperial fiscal reform with super-states and control of natural and human resources. Unlike Mackinder, however, Oliver took up biography as his medium, working within established literary and historical frameworks and using familiar local topics to illustrate larger forces. Oliver, while not a scholar, had made a name as managing partner at Debenham's and as a radical Chamberlainite. *Alexander Hamilton* had begun, he confessed to Leo Amery in early 1906, as 'a political pamphlet… for the times. … I should never have undertaken to write about Hamilton unless I had felt that his job had a great likeness to our own'. What emerged was a philosophic investigation of federalism and the extent to which the American example presented a feasible and enduring model for Anglo-Saxon thriving. Hamilton, Oliver concluded, was 'too big & glorious a character to mangle for political purposes'.[61]

Up to now, Oliver's *Hamilton* has been seen mainly as a constitutional intervention. Because Oliver 'was distressed by the serious constitutional problems confronting Britain at the turn of the century', he 'proposed solutions based on the ideas and methods of the founders of the United States of America in the late eighteenth century'. His *Hamilton* inspired members of Milner's Kindergarten in their scheming toward the Union of South Africa in 1910.[62] But Oliver's aims were more than constitutional. He was an active member of the Compatriots' Club, 'the leading unofficial Conservative think-tank of the Edwardian period' which sought to educate

public opinion and, by 1906, rally a Tory electorate and provide policy 'guidance' to Parliamentary candidates.[63] Moreover, Oliver was a self-styled man of action. Though a fervent supporter of Compatriots' goals, he balked at the club's 'afternoon lectures to mixed audiences': 'when there are gathered together… so many people in charming hats there is a lack of passion'. Tariff reformers needed to do more to shake the placid public into action. They needed to enact a shift of mind.

To this end, Oliver crafted an accessible morality play around Hamilton and American federalism as the basis of his call for a consolidated, fiscally bounded Greater Britain. As Oliver insisted in 1906, 'Hamilton believed in the divine right of government with his whole heart'.

> The right to enforce order and to compel men to live justly, he derived, not from the interests of the people, but from the ordinances of God. Human society was something nobler than a mere convenience, a nation something greater than the sum of its subjects. One of the duties of the state was the wellbeing of its citizens, but the whole duty of every citizen was the wellbeing of the state.[64]

In tune with other radical Tory imperialists, Oliver promoted an idealist notion of the state as the basis for fiscal reform. More than most, however, he used one inspired and unforgettable historical example to make his case. Hamilton's attitude toward federal commerce, Oliver said, clearly resonated with the present prospect of a British imperial union.[65] It would be misleading, Oliver claimed, to be distracted by the caveat that Hamilton, in his time, had dealt mainly in constitutional argument and occasionally gestured toward Adam Smith. '[Hamilton] only offered this sop to the doctrinaires because he knew it was quite safe to do so; but all the same it was a mistake', Oliver told Amery. 'He must have known quite well in his heart that if you desire a union you must gird it about & make it independent & self-sufficing'.[66]

Oliver's conclusions about the meaning of Hamilton's work mirrored Amery's planning for the foundation of the Beit Chair two years earlier. Constitutional talk merely served as a conduit for leading political audiences toward a deeper awareness of the state and all its vital systems. While Oliver's British Empire looked to the American union for moral and practical inspiration, it resisted what Oliver saw as the nationalistic premise of that union by demanding a re-elaboration of citizenship. Citizenship was

to be based on individual self-surrender, not national identity. Whereas Hamilton had fought against devolved loyalties, Oliver argued that any federal scheme which ignored the existence of separate nationalities in the British Empire was 'predestined to ruin'. To get past the problem of nation, the project of achieving unitary imperial sovereignty required the remaking of the most basic political unit, the individual. 'Sovereignty can never be secure while it rests upon a confusion of legal formulas and brittle sympathies; but only when it has been founded boldly upon the free and deliberate choice of the citizens of the empire'. The integrity of the imperial state existed in its ability 'to act directly upon, and to touch, without the favour of any intermediary, the humblest of its citizens in the remotest corner of its dominions'.[67]

Oliver's vision suffered one glaring problem. There was no such legal category as imperial 'citizen' in the British world.[68] At no imminent date would the British Empire be reaching the 'humblest' of its *subjects* in Assam or Nigeria without a vast chain of intermediaries. When Oliver wrote that the 'meaning of Empire to a free people is not a stunting and overshadowing growth, but a proud and willing subordination', he was referring to the citizens of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and a reconstructed Southern Africa.[69] The subjects of autocratic empire, on the other hand, were no strangers to subordination; nationalism was to be their rejoinder to a global system of entrenched political, economic, and moral inequality. Indian nationalism, at that very moment, was gathering force, spurred on by its own internal fractures and demanding heightened degrees of political autonomy from the imperial rule. In Southern Africa, the postwar systematization of racial discrimination produced an increasingly coherent 'native' politics of resistance. Throughout the British world, in fact, practices of political and labor exclusion, justified on racial and civilization lines, gave rise to an equally global retaliation. By the end of the Edwardian era, Britain's empire would be tearing itself apart. Fiscal union remained elusive; citizenship-as-surrender, an airy credo. Statist historical thinkers and polemicists such as Oliver, Mackinder, Amery, and Hewins felt these developments. As we will see, some responded creatively; some despaired. But through their vigorous, impassioned, and uncompromising contributions during the heady years of the tariff controversy, their theoretical models of state and citizenship lived on, in altered form, to be taken up by the next generation as it sought to re-forge the fraying bonds of worldwide empire.

The New Colonial Crisis

From London and Oxford, the first twelve years of twentieth-century imperial politics appeared to be defined by a series of overlapping problems. The Unionist party destroyed itself over the fiscal question. Tariff reformers enunciated a sharper, historicized vision of state development. Milner's Kindergarten pursued reconstruction by any means in South Africa. British planners, seeking a more unified front in matters of defense, elevated the self-governing colonies to Dominion status at the Colonial Conference of 1907. Yet those Dominions remained wary of metropolitan overbearing. But there were other forces gathering, from India, South Africa, and their global diasporas, that erupted to the fore of British imperial affairs by 1912.

Between 1898 and 1905, George Nathaniel Curzon's viceroyalty accelerated trends already underway for decades in Indian society. Regional, ethnic, and religious political identities hardened, in conversation with and in defiance of the bureaucratic activities and shifting rationales of the Raj. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, met with increasing criticism from domestic opinion as a vehicle for meaningful political change. Militant foreign nationalisms appealed to disenchanted activists, who in turn took up radical and violent activities on the subcontinent.[70]

Curzon's ignominious resignation in 1905, and Liberal icon John Morley's appointment as Secretary of State in 1906, at first seemed to signal a new direction in British-Indian relations. But Morley's attitude merely reinforced existing lines of antagonism. Morley refused to recognize Indian agitation as political, publicly insisting that the root of recent Indian 'unrest, discontent, sedition' was, in fact, 'racial and not political'. Moreover, as Morley told his viceroy Lord Minto, 'We may wish to believe that a native and one of our own race are equally entitled to appointment to the highest posts, but as a matter of fact this cannot be… to put it briefly, the British population simply would not stand it… [we cannot] ignore the fact that we are the ruling race, and that there is a limit beyond which that race will not put up with the predominance of Native power'. While Morley co-authored the Indian Councils Act of 1909 as a sop to nationalists, it was too little, too late to stem the rise of violent agitation in India.[71] Already by 1908, terrorist campaigns had become a fixture of Indian resistance to the Raj. The wave of anti-imperial writing and attacks on British officials in the fall of 1909 marked an 'accelerated phase of violent protest', to which the India Office responded with the Indian Press Bill of 1910, censoring all suspected seditious material.[72]

Metropolitan response ran aground yet again on the shoals of racial and historical discrimination. The Oxford Round Table had harkened to Oliver's vision of transcendent unity under an imperial state, and to the cautious liberalism that informed classicist Alfred Zimmern's views of ancient Greece.[73] But if the Round Table invoked notions of local, individualized citizenship to resolve the specter of Dominion separatism, it used the same formula to condemn Indian and wider 'native' nationalism as ill-taught, mistaken, and premature. Such was the response of earnest imperial thinkers to the new colonial crisis that overtook imperial affairs by 1912. Summarizing the Indian situation, *The Round Table* mused that authority must necessarily pass more and more into native hands, leading toward that vague end, 'colonial self-government'. But, the contributor[74] sniffed, 'even India has come in recent years to learn something of what colonial self-government means'.

> Elsewhere in the world it implies capacity to keep internal order, if not also to contribute to the safety, and aspire to share the control, of a greater whole. Elsewhere it implies the existence not merely of a government 'broad based upon the people's will', but of a people sufficiently educated and organized to choose their rulers.[75]

No one could conceive of peace in India without 70,000 British troops, the article insisted; 'even more unthinkable is the notion of the illiterate multitudes of India, whom no one but the officials of an "alien bureaucracy" has ever endeavoured to "represent"—that gigantic matter of inimical races, tribes, castes and religions—gathered to ballot boxes to record their votes'.[76]

Only a few months later, the *Round Table* lamented the further disorderly unfolding of Indian affairs, this time set in relief by the attempted assassination of the viceroy and leading administrative force behind the construction of New Delhi, Charles Hardinge, as he paraded through Chandni Chowk in December 1912. 'The procession re-formed', the *Round Table* proudly reported; 'the ceremony proceeded with an inevitableness that gave pleasure to many English hearts'. And yet, the *Round Table* held, nothing else was inevitable when it came to raising India to a 'civilized' level of political engagement. Terrorist violence stemmed from the fact that '[our] educational system, or want of system, has produced in thousands a class of young enthusiasts bred up on textbooks of European politics and science'.

> It has set before them, as the grand lesson of history, the inspiring story of nations winning their freedom from kings. But it has done nothing to remind the Indian student of the huge antecedent task that lies in front of him, before he can rightly compare himself to a man of Athens under Pisistratus, far less to a Roundhead under King Charles. It has never brought home to uncritical intelligence the initial fact that European civilization is based on the brotherhood of the citizens…. We have taught the Indians that a nation should win freedom: we have never taught them how they should first become a nation.[77]

Paradoxically, the more Round Table rhetoricians taunted Indians with the notion of 'brotherhood', the more tightly they drew in their definition of citizenship. 'Caste', 'religion', and 'tribe' stood as pejorative terms when imperial thinkers engaged that empire's greatest dependency. White Dominion nationalists could claim citizenship based on national and local self-government; but as long as Indian social structures acknowledged religion and caste—categories which were so much in themselves the product of engagement with British rule[78]—Indians could never be nationalists, and they could never be citizens.

These trials extended far beyond the subcontinent. The British imperial world continued to cleave along what increasingly appeared to be a color line. As Indian nationalism grew increasingly radicalized by administrative foot-dragging and British insult, so too did native Africans and 'coloreds' in South Africa respond to their newly enshrined political subordination. It had been none other than Lionel Curtis who wrote in 1907, while soldering the Union of South Africa, 'The fact is we have all been moving steadily from the Cape idea of mixing up white, brown, and black and developing the different grades of colour strictly on the lines of European civilisation, to the very opposite conception of encouraging as far as possible the black man to separate from the white and to develop a civilisation, as he is beginning to do in Basutoland, on his own lines'.[79] The South African Native National Congress, renamed the African National Congress in 1923, was founded in Bloemfontein in January 1912, two years after British, Uitlander, and Boer parties had concluded a Union founded in no small part on the model of racial segregation Curtis espoused: 'the emergence for the first time of a unitary white supremacist state'. Union and its aftermath brought a series of sustained attacks on black political rights and economic security, including the discriminatory Labour Act of 1911 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 which expelled thousands of black

laborer-tenants from white farms. The newly formed Congress mobilized against these measures, maneuvering in relation to an ongoing passive resistance campaign against 'colored' exclusion, initiated by Mohandas Gandhi.[80]

Meanwhile, in British Columbia and the northwestern United States, the intensification of 'Asiatic exclusion' signaled a new international crisis. Punjabi Sikhs had begun arriving in western Canada and the United States in March of 1904. As their numbers grew through the decade, so did the percentage turned away at ports of entry. Violence soon defined the encounter between white populations and South Asian immigrants, with the founding of the militant Asiatic Exclusion League in early 1907 and Vancouver race riots later that year. In response, the anti-British and anti-imperial Ghadr Party was founded in San Francisco on 1 November 1913 under the leadership of Har Dayal. Only seven months later, the *Komagata Maru* incident rocked Indo-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian relations, when 356 ship-bound Punjabis were rejected from Vancouver under thinly veiled racist pretenses.[81]

These currents, compounded by the spectacle of the 1911 Chinese revolution and the memories it dredged up of the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, left imperial activists in Britain anxiously proclaiming the opening of an unprecedented front in international life. Curtis and Sidney Low's pre-war interventions in the study of the imperial past opened up a momentous prospect. They drew Dominions and dependencies side-by-side and they sought a resolution to the swelling tension between those ill-begot 'twin' empires which characterized the period around 1912. Wartime history would have to answer to these imperatives.

As Chap. 6 will explain, the war opened up heady new horizons for scholars and experts in propaganda and information sectors. Historical interpretation addressed new mandates: namely the wooing of U.S. opinion by way of 'shared' constitutional and racial pasts, the distancing of Britain from a Teutonic storyline, and the justification a worldwide war effort through attention to a more holistic, if still fractured, imperial story. But as we will see, mobilization on even such a vast scale could not fully break the long-standing and vigorously maintained distinction between the 'civilized' empire of the future and the 'benighted' or 'backwards' spaces of alien rule. This disconnect created unstable ground for the historical projects spearheaded by Curtis and Low before the war. It also was to constrain postwar horizons.

Notes

1. Lionel Curtis to Philip Kerr, 2 March 1912, papers of Lionel Curtis and the Round Table, MSS Eng.hist. c 806/142, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts, Oxford. Quoted in Lavin, 'Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth' in A. F. Madden and D. K. Fieldhouse, eds., *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth: Essays Presented to Sir Edgar Williams* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 104. See also Lionel Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916).
2. Sidney Low, 'The Organization of Imperial Studies in London', 27 November 1912. Reprinted in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 491.
3. Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, vol. 2 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 26–27, 178, 386; Andrew S. Thompson, 'Low, Sir Sidney James Mark', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34608, 13 August 2015.
4. Desmond Chapman-Huston, *The Lost Historian: A Memoir of Sir Sidney Low* (London: John Murray, 1936), 176.
5. Sidney Low, *Vision of India* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1906), v.
6. Dennis Griffiths, *Plant Here* The Standard (London, Macmillan and Co., 1996), 161.
7. Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, 178.
8. Sidney Low, *Egypt in Transition* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1914).
9. Low, 'Organization of Imperial Studies', 2–3.
10. Sidney Low to Ronald Montagu Burrows, 6 December 1913, Ronald Montagu Burrows papers, KAP/BUR/113, King's College London Archives.
11. Low to Burrows, 6 December 1913.
12. H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Milner to Markham, 31 March 1906 and 24 June 1906, Markham papers, Markham 25/56.
13. Buchan to Lyttelton, 11 December 1906, Lyttelton papers, CHAN II 3/1, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.
14. [John Buchan], *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1906), 6.
15. [Buchan], *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, 1, 6.
16. [Buchan], *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, 4.
17. [Buchan], *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, 306.
18. Leo Amery to Leo Maxse, 20 September 1903, Maxse papers, Maxse Mss. 451, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester UK.

19. John Buchan to Leo Amery, 25 July 1903, AMEL 1/1/14/1.
20. L. S. Amery, *The Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade: Four Addresses on the Logical Groundwork of the Free Trade Theory*, popular edition (London: Love and Malcomson, 1908), vii, 2–3.
21. As Frank Trentmann explains, 'Chamberlain's problem was not with cosmopolitan critics of empire… but with the many imperialists whose vision of imperial power, history, and trusteeship had no room for Tariff Reform'. Liberal journalist John St. Loe Strachey, for example, insisted that history taught a very different lesson: 'States of former days which tried to maintain oversea Empires based on exclusive trading… withered away because they insisted… that an Empire cannot be kept together on sentiment and on the ties of race, language, and common institutions, but must have the material bonds of preferential trading'. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption, and Civil Society in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 161, 170; Anthony J. Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Strachey, 'Free Trade and the Empire', in Sydney Goldman, ed., *The Empire and the Century: A Series of Essays on Imperial Problems and Possibilities* (London: J. Murray, 1905), 145.
22. Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 4.
23. Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 4, 10, 104.
24. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 27–133.
25. Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*, 99–100; Peter Cain, 'The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism' in Cornelia Navari, ed., *British Politics and the Spirit of the Age* (Keele, UK, 1996), 41–65; Amery, *Fundamental Fallacies*.
26. Leo Amery to Alfred Milner, 27 November 1906, Amery papers, AMEL 1/3/40/1.
27. Leo Amery to Alfred Deakin, 28 May 1908, Amery papers, AMEL 2/3/1.
28. Leo Amery, 'The Twin Empires', speech at Melbourne, September 1913, Amery papers AMEL 1/2/18.
29. Gerard M. Koot, *English Historical Economics, 1870–1926: The Rise of Economic History and Neomercantilism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83–91. Seeley prefaced the *Expansion of England* by expressing his debt to Mr. Cunningham, 'the author of that most interesting book, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce'*. J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883), v.
30. E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 26.
31. Green quotes William Cunningham, 'A Plea for Pure Theory', *Economic Review*, 2 (January 1892), 34.

32. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 27.
33. Stefan Collini, 'Particular Polities: Political Economy and the Historical Method' in Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 259–260.
34. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 161. Firth would go on to be both a supporter of tariff reform and an earnest advocate of 'political' as opposed to 'constitutional' topics in the Oxford History School. C. H. Firth to W. A. S. Hewins, 23 November 1895, 8 October 1903 and 12 June 1909, W. A. S. Hewins papers, MSS Hewins 44/104-5, 46/70 and 52/109, University of Sheffield Special Collections, Sheffield, UK.
35. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 166.
36. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 135–136.
37. Board of Historical Studies, Minutes of Meetings 1894-c1918, Faculty of History, HIST/1/1/3, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK.
38. W. A. S. Hewins, *English Trade and Finance, Chiefly in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen & Co., 1892), p. xiv–xv; William Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1890–1892).
39. Hewins, *English Trade and Finance,* p. xiv–xv.
40. W. J. Ashley, *An Introduction to English Economic History and Theory: Part II: The End of the Middle Ages* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 379–394 and 'Political Economy and the Tariff Problem' in *Compatriots' Club Lectures: First Series* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), 233–263.
41. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 140; William Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1882), 299–324.
42. Amery went even further back: 'Like Mr. Chamberlain, Edward IV and his advisers kept their eyes constantly fixed, not on the volume of foreign trade, but on the employment given to the people of the country'. *Fundamental Fallacies of Free Trade: Four Addresses on the Logical Groundwork of the Free Trade Theory* (London, 1905), 116; Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 183.
43. Four years after Chamberlain's incendiary Birmingham address, the Tariff Reform League was still instructing speakers to use selections from the speech referring to a new imperial dawn at the exclusion of its other points. 'The Empire is not old', it quoted. 'The Empire is in its infancy. Now is the time when we can mould the Empire, and we and those who live with us can decide its future destinies'. Joseph Chamberlain, speech at Birmingham, 15 May 1903, quoted in Tariff Reform League, *A Short Handbook for Speakers* (London: Tariff Reform League, 1907), 219.

44. Hewins to B. Webb, 31 May 1903, Passfield papers, II/4/B, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences.
45. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 42–46; Carlyon Bellairs, 'Our Maritime Supremacy and Protection' in The Eighty Club, *The Liberal View: A Series of Articles on Current Politics* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1904), 2; Free Trade Union, *Handbook to the Tariff Question* (London: Free Trade Union, 1908); 5–6, 21–22.
46. Hewins, 'Memorandum on the difference between current and former controversies between Free Trade and Protection', 18 February 1907, Balfour papers, MSS Add. 49779, British Library.
47. Duncan Bell, *The idea of Greater Britain: empire and the future of world order, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 264; Peter J. Cain, 'Empire and the Languages of Character and Virtue in Later Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4:2 (August 2007), 249–273.
48. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 152; Cunningham, *The Rise and Decline of the Free Trade Movement* (London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1904) 158; Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 6:1 (1953), 1–15.
49. Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership*, eds. Barbara Drake and Margaret I. Cole (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1948), 87–88, Donald Winch, *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 336.
50. Participants ranged from Liberal thinkers, such as R. B. Haldane and Bertrand Russell, to radical Tory activists such as Amery and Arthur Steel-Maitland. Green, *Crisis of Conservatism*, 1818; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 62–73; 'Minutes, 1902–1906', Co-Efficients Club papers, ASSOC 17, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, UK.
51. To Hewins, 'British Imperialism' as policy and a movement had been long incomplete without agitation for a change in commercial policy; he had pushed Chamberlain on the issue long before the Colonial Secretary himself had settled upon fiscal policy as a battlefront for advancing imperial consolidation. Peter Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (New Haven, CT, 1994), 525; Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 175; Hewins, 'The Fiscal Problem: The Present State of the Case for Mr. Chamberlain's Policy', *The Fortnightly Review*, 74 (September 1903), 592; Hewins, 'Memorandum on the Difference between Current and Former Controversies between Free Trade and Protection'.

52. Webb, *Our Partnership*, 87. Also quoted in Koot, *English Historical Economics,* 170.
53. Ashley to Maxse, 19 November 1905, Maxse Mss. 453.
54. Beit candidates, appraisals [October 1905], MS Milner 32, ff. 298–300; W. J. Ashley, 'Beit Professorship of Colonial History in the University of Oxford: Statement of W. J. Ashley and Accompanying Letters', [Birmingham, UK, 1905], Worcester College Library, Oxford, UK. See also Chap. 3 of this thesis.
55. Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 147–153; Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 266.
56. Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, 157–58, 194; Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 54.
57. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire*, 4–5; Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, 194; Koot, *English Historical Economics*, 174.
58. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire*, 53; Brian Blouet, *Halford Mackinder: A Biography* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1987), 134.
59. Halford J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History', *The Geographical Journal*, 4:23 (April 1904), 421–437, esp. 423.
60. Mackinder, 'Geographical Pivot of History'.
61. F. S. Oliver to L. S. Amery, 26 March 1906, Amery papers, AMEL 2/5/5.
62. John D. Fair, 'F. S. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton*, and the 'American Plan' for Resolving Britain's Constitutional Crises, 1903–1921', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10:1 (1999), 1; Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men: the 'Kindergarten' in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968), 128.
63. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 74.
64. F. S. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union* (London: A. Constable and co., 1906), 451–452.
65. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton*, 466–469.
66. F. S. Oliver to L. S. Amery, 6 May 1906, Amery papers, AMEL 2/5/5.
67. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton*, 461, 481.
68. Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010).
69. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton*, 488.
70. N. Gerald Barrier, *Banned: Controversial Literature and Political Control in British India, 1907–1947* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 8–9.
71. Marc Jason Gilbert, 'Insurmountable Distinctions: Racism and the British Response to the Emergence of Indian Nationalism' in Roger D. Long, ed., *The Man on the Spot: Essays on British Empire History*, 174–176; Stanley Wolpert, *Morley and India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 169, 180.

72. Barrier, *Banned,* 26–46.
73. Alfred Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911).
74. The *Round Table* only began publishing signed articles in 1966.
75. 'India, Old Ways and New', *The Round Table*, 3:9 (1912), 69–70.
76. 'India, Old Ways and New'.
77. 'Political Crime in India', *The Round Table*, 3:10 (1913), 307–313.
78. For a sampling of relevant literature, see Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966); Lucy Carroll, 'Colonial Perceptions of Indian Society and the Emergence of Caste', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 37:2 (February 1978), 233–250; Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2000).
79. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Saul Dubow, 'South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship' in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager, and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885–1994* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Dubow quotes Curtis to Patrick Duncan, 26 November 1907, Duncan papers, University of Cape Town.
80. Saul Dubow, *The African National Congress* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2000), 1–3.
81. Harold Gould, *Sikhs, Swamis, Students and Spies: the India Lobby in the United States, 1900–1946* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 79–80, 137–138, 145–149; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*; Karen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 39–45; Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press), 1979.

CHAPTER 6

Mobilizing Pasts During and After the Great War

The Great War, according to those who lived through it, had a shattering but incomplete effect on the contours and conventions of history in imperial Britain. This chapter examines the rough shocks endured by workers in history, and the new horizons opened for them, during the ordeal of 1914–1918. A successive and final chapter finds that interwar thinkers, however, were never truly uncoupled from their pasts; rather, they sought to renovate foundational Victorian and Edwardian models of empire in the service of global reconstruction.

But to defer to the ghosts of 1916. Even before the four-month Battle of the Somme devoured over 1.5 million lives, Sidney Low found Britain's past changed. 'The War has profoundly affected out outlook in every sphere of mental as well as material activity. No body of intellectual workers is likely to feel its influence more acutely than those who occupy themselves with the study of history'. Registering a wartime boom in historical books, despite a fall in fiction and general literature, Low dryly wrote, 'It begins to be recognized that history does somewhat closely concern the average human being, who has to pay and fight and suffer. The war has made us all students…. We cannot write in our history books, any more than we can write in our newspapers, or for that matter in our private letters, as we might have done in the days before August 1914'.[1]

What, then, was the 'new orientation' of history, as Low called it, effected by the onset of the Great War? For one, the war brought back to the intersection of professional history and public life a 'volcanic', un-'scientific' vision of historical time, one largely banished after the passing of

A. Behm, *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion*,
Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-54850-4_6

J. A. Froude. The inverse effect was a blow to gradualism following 'rule and system', 'great natural tendencies', the 'working out of inevitable law of genesis and growths, even [the] gradual realization of a design which might be inherent in the nature of things, if it was not indeed framed by the dictates of Eternal Wisdom'.[2] Low, by his own admission, wrote outside an increasingly exclusive 'scientific' profession and was none too pleased by that fact. But his complaints against scientific history, mingled with the disruption of war and the attendant distancing of all things British from Germanic thought, provided crucial insights. Dismissing Kant, Hegel, Treitschke, and successors for their haughty 'altitude' from human affairs, Low turned his fire on the unfortunate tendency toward Teutonic complicity among English historians. They 'were captivated by the Teutonic investigators into the origins of societies, and institutions, and accepted with effusion the whole quasi-scientific apparatus of these authorities'. England, in Low's account, had gulped strong draughts 'from the fountains of antiquarian and juristical learning', resulting in 'a wide popularization of the Germanic idea of racial superiority' and a 'revulsion' against the culture of other peoples, openly or inadvertently perpetuated in England by experts ranging from Thomas Carlyle to Max Müller to William Stubbs. 'It must be difficult', Low mused, 'for the younger generation among us to realise the kind of contempt for the Latin and Celtic culture and character which were fashionable in mid-Victorian England'. For all its pretenses toward rational, universalist engagement, English historical enterprise emerged ultimately as 'the exhibition of a curious kind of racial self-conceit'.[3]

What, then, would Low have as the British future, if England gave up 'the extravagances of the Teutonic hypothesis' and renegotiated the terms of its past? Low dismissed '"Anglo-Saxon" theory': '[we] now recognise, that alike in our blood and in our culture we are extremely mixed'. A chastened historical outlook could but embrace otherness and inconsistency, 'losing something of its dogmatic certainty, its definiteness, it symmetrical limitation'. Whereas nineteenth-century historians had been preoccupied with Great Britain, and 'that part of it called England', historians from 1916 would—or should—be forced to disengage from orderliness, homogeneity: in short, from Stubbs's 'special themes'. Stubbs, Freeman, Froude, Seeley: all were guilty of exaggerating 'the phase of political organization' in Britain. '[Their] reader may almost be excused', Low concluded, 'for thinking that the divine purpose, if there is a divine purpose, underlying all the centuries of human effort is to arrive at voting by ballot, and government by committee'.[4]

But barbarism, in the form of war, had returned, belying the triumph of industrialism and progress over militarism, theocracy, and feudalism. And more apparent than ever was the 'Will to Power' of people. The 'State', as revered by Victorian and Edwardian contemporaries, could not compete against the vicissitudes and higher designs of commercialism and democracy. Low's judgment spilled forth, censuring his teachers and colleagues for the self-assuredness and self-righteousness that only a lost generation could rue. 'These bankers, and bishops, and country gentlemen, these sons of wealthy shipowners and wine-merchants, these well-placed civil servants, in their decorous middle-class domesticity—no wonder they found it easy to take sane and temperate views'.[5] History was turning on history: at least, on history in its Greater British conception. Low spoke to the experiences of Englishmen sensing imminent obliteration for the first time: 'Arnold would have found even less "freedom to grow wise" if his literary labours had been liable to be interrupted by a Zeppelin bomb dropped at his front-door'. Indeed, a German zeppelin had hovered over Low's London home in late 1915, and then a bomb had fallen fifty yards from his sister's house at Hampstead. Of all the absurdities and crimes Low worried about as 1916 unfolded, not the least was a popular numbness being inspired by 'Germanic' platitudes translating to plain, English 'getting on'. Why weren't Londoners angrier? Why weren't Britons, in a material sense, taking up swords?[6]

In 1916, Low stood convinced that professional history could never recover from the rupture of 1914, and also that the world would be better for it. Historians 'may be doubtful, in spite of Hegel, whether history is after all a rational process'. To Low, this was a fine and humbling thing:

> [T]hey may not see so clearly as some of them did a few decades ago that march of peoples and states through the cycles towards that "one far-off divine event", to which the whole Creation moves. The purpose, whatever it may be, is hidden; what is plain is that in the life of nations, as in that of individuals, a large part is played by what we must call chance, by sheer accident, by flood and conflict, by such unforeseen visitations of nature as flood, plague, and storm, and by the incalculable and capricious force of personality.[7]

But for better or worse, those English-cum-Greater British historians proved resilient. They filled out the ranks of Britain's new official propaganda and information systems during the Great War. They contributed as

private citizens. They forged the revised script of Anglo-American partnership. And they built a new citadel to hold fast against the storms of claims-making that would rock the postwar empire. For all his raw precision and prescience, Low would, in the course of history set against history, be the one left behind.

'Services Which Only Trained Historians Could Render': Mobilizing 'Facts', 1914–1918

Almost three years later, the Royal Historical Society gathered on the day of the armistice. Its mood was one of 'mutual congratulation sane and serious' according to the meeting's chair, Vice President R. A. Roberts. The Society's president, Oxford Regius Professor of Modern History Charles Oman, was unable to preside because of duties at the Foreign Office, Roberts explained. It was unfortunate, as the first meeting of the Society after the signing of the armistice would have been a momentous opportunity for Oman to survey the accomplishments of historians during the years of mobilization. As Roberts went on to recount, the Society had been far from idle despite the interruptions of the war. Some members had worked in propaganda and censorship; others lectured on the causes of the war and the aims of the British effort. Interpreting the past to make sense of the war, of Britain's global engagements, of the very forces at work in a turbulent world: such were the 'Services which only trained historians could render'.[8] In short, the Great War had created a new sphere of opportunities for the British historical profession, drawing scholars into private and governmental publicity efforts, especially pamphleteering, and the new state propaganda apparatus created during the conflict.

The coordinated assault by British intellectuals on public opinion after 1914 was stupendous in its subtlety and focus. 'To all outward purposes, it merely appeared that Britain's intelligentsia had mobilised itself out of spontaneous patriotism with no motive other than a desire to explain the issues of the war as they saw it from their individual and personal perspectives'.[9] Indeed, as soon as hostilities broke out, Oxford academics leapt to the task of mobilizing hearts and minds for the war effort. Even though mobilization virtually cleared Oxford of its undergraduate population, Beit Lecturer Reginald Coupland sallied forth to refocus imperial studies around a new purpose. '[In] the glow of reborn vigor, I have collected the remnants of the Ralegh Club—a total of 5! We are agreed that it ought to

go on. Mainly because when the propaganda begins next year it will need an Oxford vehicle: & that is the Ralegh's job', he wrote in late 1914.[10] A. L. Smith, medieval historian and Master of Balliol, launched into correspondence with the Workers' Educational Association, Victoria League, and Union of Democratic Control about 'bringing the case for war to the working classes' through methods that boasted the 'power to hold a popular audience' but also the 'tact and moderation as would disarm the suspicion of "Jingo spell-binding"'.[11] Smith's concerns pointed to a 'further operational ground rule of British propaganda, namely that it should always be based primarily upon so-called neutral facts or objective information'. No better candidates to fit this bill than historians.[12]

By late 1914, the Cabinet was urging Asquith to form an organization that would influence and inform public opinion both at home and abroad, in the face of German information campaigns. The two bodies that emerged from this mandate were Crewe House, which specialized alongside the War Office in mass propaganda among enemy populations, and the Wellington House, which focused on making the more subtle sell to elite opinion in Britain and America. C. F. Masterman, a celebrated Liberal journalist and pro-interventionist Cabinet member, oversaw the development of Wellington House's measured, nominally objective information campaigns. To this end, Masterman appointed Arnold Toynbee, J. W. Headlam-Morley, and Lewis Namier as the unit's core writers. John Buchan soon joined as an external contributor.[13] Toynbee, nephew of the famous Balliol social reformer, was himself a product of Edwardian Balliol who had gone on to make a name for himself as a scholar of the classical and Mediterranean worlds. He threw himself into public service in the First World War, resigning his college fellowship and, for the time, devoting his output to contemporary Ottoman affairs. Headlam-Morley, trained in Göttingen, Berlin, and Cambridge, had begun his career as professor of Greek and ancient history but, moved by the confluence of foreign politics and his own educational experience, switched his focus to modern Germany at the turn of the century. By the outbreak of war, he was Britain's preeminent academic commentator on German and colonial affairs, an ideal candidate for Wellington House work.

Namier, meanwhile, captured in one contradictory and often frustrated personality the multiple and volatile currents of European crisis, British academic life, wartime information politics, and Anglo-American historical thought. Born Ludwik Bernsztajn vel Niemirowski in 1888 in Russian Poland to a Jewish family that had embraced Catholicism, Namier went on

to become an ardent English patriot and one of the most vocal professional chroniclers of England's 'moderate liberty'.[14] Run out of Lwòw University by a hail of anti-Semitic slurs, Namier set his sights on the London School of Economics and then Oxford. Up he went to Balliol in 1908, to come down in 1911 with first in modern history but empty-handed in the fellowship competition at All Souls, an outcome he later blamed on racial prejudice.[15] In his time at Oxford, Namier developed an unshakable belief in the contrast 'between the practical, sober, interest-based political tradition of England and the ideologically riven, overdramatized, ultimately catastrophic politics of continental Europe', a view which led him to notorious methodological extremes. 'Namierism' was to become, in due course, derogatory shorthand for the willful dismissal of ideas as factors in historical change.[16]

Well before that point, Namier was busy constructing an English past that suited both his own quest for belonging and the imperatives of British propaganda in the First World War. What started with the prompt for the 1912 Beit Essay competition overflowed into a seventeen-year undertaking, the final result of which was Namier's magnum opus, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929). In Namier's own words, the whole project began when he contemplated the essay prompt 'Proposals for Imperial Federation before 1887'. 'I never got beyond the American Revolution, having found plentiful material during that period', he recounted to the Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, Philip Kerr. Namier set out to explain the failure of enduring union between England and America. The cause of the revolution, he decided, was structural. '[The] Imperial Problem could not be solved in the eighteenth century because of the political and intellectual condition of the Empire at the time'. With no future in Oxford, Namier traveled to the United States in 1913 to conduct research on pre-revolutionary colonial politics. While Charles M. Andrews and a wave of American historians had started to look at the period from the American side, Namier hoped to forge his own 'imperial school' from England, 'to find out all I could about every single Member who sat in the House between 1761 and 1784 [and] I naturally pay special attention to any connection I can trace with America or other Colonies'. Contrary to later jibes at 'Namierism', the grand vision preceded the data. Namier planned to 'rescue' the eighteenth century 'from the brilliant contemporary writers of letter and memoirs who, in certain ways, remind one of present-day Oxford undergraduates—they were not out to probe matters

but to tell amusing stories; also from the oratory of the Whigs and their "literary after-thoughts"'.[17]

Namier strained to develop this project after leaving Oxford. He reported his findings back to an eager Lionel Curtis and Edward Grigg at the Round Table, promising them a short piece that would illuminate the historical dynamics of the eighteenth-century Anglo-American split so as to provide a blueprint for closer relations. But Namier's slow pace of work and staggering perfectionism infuriated Curtis, who wanted to take the findings public in the Round Table's first survey of imperial affairs.[18] With the outbreak of war, Namier then volunteered twice for armed service. He was rejected in the first instance, and in the second, reassigned based on his historical acumen to the Foreign Office intelligence department, with responsibilities at Wellington House for advocating the rights of nations then under the Austro-Hungarian empire. After the war, Namier struggled to get back to his study of the structural impediments to Anglo-American union. He briefly returned to Balliol as a history tutor, and scrambled throughout the 1920s to find paid employment that would allow him to pursue his scholarship. In 1926 Namier turned to the Rhodes Trust, the fiduciary embodiment of an Anglo-American reconciliation, for £600.[19] The Trustees acquiesced after sounding out H. A. L. Fisher and Hugh Egerton as to the merits of Namier's project. An ailing Egerton replied via amanuensis that he knew Namier 'to be a most conscientious and zealous worker, his one weak point, between ourselves, being that he has possibly an exaggerated opinion of himself'. But there could be 'no question—as you say—of the importance of the subject': 'if the Rhodes Trustees can provide the money to assist him, it will be that they will be making a valuable contribution to the advancement of historical knowledge'.[20] Anyone of influence, from Rhodes House to London, knew the importance of investigating British Parliaments 'in their relation to the development of American Independence'.[21] The only question was whether Namier was the man for the job. The Rhodes Trust was willing to follow through on its investment.

Namier's example, set against the wider mobilization of historians in the First World War, throws into relief the three key themes with which British historical propagandists grappled. The first was the idea of a natural closeness with America. Namier, while nominally agitating on behalf of central European subject states out of Wellington House and the Foreign Office, spent the bulk his career explaining away the Anglo-American past in the service of the future. His work reflected a concern with

Anglo-American relations that pervaded British policymaking and academic circles in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Transatlantic unity, in fact, proved a thorny object for British propagandists. Masterman and Wellington House fell under criticism for showing too little initiative on the U.S. front: 'Attention was drawn to our failure to make any impression on the American West and Middle West, and to the extent to which the Germans, by bold and skillful contracts for advertising matter, were closing a large area of the American newspaper and publishing world to British propaganda'.[22] In February 1917, Lloyd George appointed Buchan director of the new Ministry of Information, with a remit that included Masterman's operation. Buchan went on to trumpet the Ministry's newfound success, particularly in the American Midwest. Lecturers such as George Parkin, Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, were touring the country; sympathetic editors gave UK views prominent outlets. 'I think there can be no question but that the British propagandist organisation in the United States is being managed with very exceptional ability and energy', Buchan reported by September 1917.[23]

The tightening of Anglo-American ties based on supposed commonality and natural affinity, though, required propagandists to establish a corollary break with German or Teutonic influences in favor of an exclusively Anglo-Saxon model. Other Oxford scholars of Namier's time handily contributed this vision. Authors such as Keith Feiling, Ernest Barker, and Gilbert Murray set out the case that Germany had not only instigated the war, but that its singular lust for power had put German political culture beyond the pale of civilized engagement. Barker, in particular—though previously sympathetic to arguments for strong government—denounced post-Bismarckian German political thought in his contribution to the Oxford pamphlet series. Nietzsche and Treitschke had, in different ways, been prophets; 'both alike made power their watchword; both alike loved war, and striving for mastery, and subdual; both hated England'.[24] Barker and others sought to display this supposed German hatred of England and English moderation as proof of the elemental divide between the two peoples. In tune with this *zeitgeist*, the Rhodes Trust likewise abandoned the founder's original vision of a Teutonic world polity by suspending German scholarships to Oxford between 1914 and 1929.[25]

A third theme, the rallying of Britain's entire empire, received more varying treatment from historians than did the first two. In general, writers sought to distance British imperial aims from Germany's supposedly rapacious appetite for colonies.[26] Many, though, persisted in treating the

empire as composed of segregated parts. Hugh Egerton, otherwise loath to join in political debates, contributed his own Oxford pamphlets on 'The British Dominions and the War' and 'Is the British Empire the Result of Wholesale Robbery?' His answer, of course, was that it was not. But true to form, Egerton described nearly exclusively the rise of a self-governing and free settler empire. India was the subject of which 'our critics are mainly thinking when they term our Empire the fruits of rapine and robbery'; but it reflected a larger rule that 'annexations have come about [because] native Governments have tended to fall to pieces as the winter snows melt before the sunshine of spring; and when the choice lies between anarchy or the assumption of rule, no people of Imperial instincts can hesitate as to their course'.[27] It was left to Ernest Trevelyan, fellow of All Souls and Reader in Indian Law at Oxford, to explain 'the reasons for the striking manifestation of Indian loyalty' in a separate pamphlet.[28] As the war dragged on, however, younger scholars in London came forward with more holistic arguments. In 1917, A. F. Pollard, fellow of All Souls, professor of constitutional history at University College London, and the soon-to-be founder of the Institute of Historical Research, published *The Commonwealth at War*. Pollard grappled with the diversity of the empire and reveled in the sweep of mobilization. The central task for postwar reconstruction, he said, was to find 'the wisdom to reconcile the manifold cross-currents of civilization and ideas which are the life-blood of the British realms' and someday 'construct a really Imperial Government… from this infinite variety'.[29] Across London universities, in fact, historians, journalists, and social theorists joined the Imperial Studies lecture circuit with topics from 'The Political Unity of the Empire' and 'The Rights and Duties of the State' to 'Nationality and Government'.[30]

Demobilizing Imperial History: Professionalization and Its Consequences

The collective work of historians as propagandists in the First World War had three general emphases: the contextualization and celebration of an Anglo-American alliance, the severing of Teutonic ties, and the unity of the imperial war effort, if not of the empire itself. The armistice, however, opened up new problems. History had been a front in the war; could it be demobilized? Whither the historical profession? Charles Lucas, that long-standing fixture of the Colonial Office, ubiquitous independent historian

and patron of Imperial Studies, had his worries. He told the Cabinet in 1920 that imperial education could not be restricted to the level of propaganda; 'we [the British] are big enough to have the truth told'. It was essential not only to dismantle the wartime information apparatus, but to support the thoroughgoing development of imperial history as a scientific vocation.[31] Indeed, the government had liquidated the Ministry of Information on 31 December 1918, intent that coordinated propaganda efforts reflected the necessities of war but not times of peace.[32]

Lucas got one thing right. Imperial education could not be restricted to the level of wartime propaganda. It was to become a much more permanent affair. Yet the two phenomena would remain deeply intertwined. The boom that swept professional British imperial history from the end of the war through the 1920s—the founding of new chairs and programs, and the consolidation of a canon—bore out key wartime currents, the most prominent of which were a preoccupation with expertise and 'fact', and the ongoing effort to revise—or reunite—Anglo-American history.

At King's College London, A. P. Newton's victory over Sidney Low in the competition for the newly created Rhodes Chair of Imperial History in 1919 signaled a partial closing of academic imperial history to journalists and practitioners, even if had been one such practitioner who had proposed an Imperial Studies project in the first place. P. J. Marshall called it 'the parting of the ways between academic and political purposes in the study of imperial history in London',[33] but in reality, it was the continuation of politics by other means. Alongside Pollard, Newton believed 'that personal commitment and "scientific detachment" must be kept separate in the writing of history and tried to exemplify this in his own writing'.[34] But the field in which Newton staked his claim was already politicized. By training, he was a historian of Puritan colonization in North America; his early work as Rhodes Professor took him to the well-trodden terrain of *Federal and Unified Constitutions* (1923) and continued the fixation with state sovereignty that had flavored tariff reform polemics in the first decade of the century. But by 1923, once polemical topics had seemingly lost their bite. Even Alexander Hamilton had achieved acceptance as a pillar in the constitutional edifice of imperial history.[35]

The immediate postwar years also saw an increased communion between British imperial and American colonial history. To commemorate his two sons killed in action, the press baron Harold Harmsworth, Lord Rothermere, founded two university chairs, one at Cambridge in 1918 for naval history and the other for American history at Oxford two years later.

Harmsworth kept his motives vague and remained detached from selection debates, but through his actions and wording he intended his gifts to honor the legacy of blue-water strategy as it led to Britain's global supremacy, and the prospect of closer union with America.[36] Around the same time, the rise of an 'imperial school' of colonial history in America provided a collaborative kick to British scholarship. Charles M. Andrews at Yale reinvigorated the Anglo-American exchange first initiated by Herbert Baxter Adams,[37] but this time emphasizing processes and structures over racial and constitutional factors. Andrews had been a student of Adams at Hopkins whom Adams pushed to study the origins of early settlements in Connecticut 'with the purpose of demonstrating their descent from Anglo-Saxon communities of freemen'. While this became Andrews's dissertation topic, he soon reached conclusions vastly different from those of his mentor. The new towns of the seventeenth century were the product of their larger colonial environment rather than any inherent Teutonic 'germ'. Central government mattered. These conclusions led Andrews, over the course of his career, to look to misapprehensions of state rather than local singularities as the underlying causes of the American revolution.[38] After teaching at Bryn Mawr and Hopkins, Andrews became Farnam Professor of American History at Yale in 1910. There, he reached out in the 1910s and 1920s to a wide group of British historians, including Newton, Lucas, and the first Harmsworth chair of naval history, J. Holland Rose, and was a motivating contributor to the first volume of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*.[39] Between the American 'imperial school' and British Imperial Studies, there soon emerged a rough consensus: the most fundamental task of the historian was to translate, for the public and foreign scholars, the nature and intentions of central British policy, dispelling misperceptions such as those that had led, 150 years before, to the Anglo-American split.

The *Cambridge History of the British Empire* was a monument to this moment and professional swing.[40] Newton, as the first Rhodes Professor, and Rose as the first Harmsworth Professor of Naval History, embarked with E. A. Benians of St. John's College, Cambridge, on the decade-long task of editing the first volume, the only one of eight in the series to appear before the Second World War. In hindsight, that work, *The Old Empire to 1783*, was remarkable in both its detail and its interpretive conservatism. Its contributors focused largely on North America, mentioning India only in relation to French and Dutch competition and Africa only in relation to the European slave trade. The aging but unflappable Lucas provided the

introduction. To Lucas, 'empire-building' as ever meant the settlement of colonies; India, meanwhile, was 'a school for administrators' and a place 'the sword was never allowed to rust'. When confronted with the fact that the British government had declared self-government as its goal for India, Lucas sounded a note of caution. The Great War had 'applied a hothouse process to movements and tendencies which were working out their own salvation in the slow and sure characteristically British way, and this must be counted as a possible source of danger, for not by haste will the Commonwealth stand'.[41] In the end, the *CHBE* plowed familiar furrows in the 1920s. But as the next sections will explain, the geopolitical shifts of the interwar years proved more unsettling to certain other imperial thinkers; Oxford produced avid if dangerously incomplete attempts at recasting policy and civic knowledge. The newly established heads of the imperial historical profession in London and Cambridge, meanwhile, spent the decade laying foundations on similar lines and similar truths that had defined the field to date.

The Round Table and *the Commonwealth of Nations*

The hardening bounds of mainstream British imperial historicism revealed themselves in the work of the Round Table, the Oxford proto-think tank that emerged, wondering at its own form and reach, from the husk of Alfred Milner's Edwardian Kindergarten. Round Table stalwart and New College classicist Alfred Zimmern's confrontation with radical Liberal economist and anti-expansionist John Hobson in September 1916 exposed the earnestness which marked that group's gradational, social imperialist and idealist convictions even in 1916. Hobson, ordinarily on the fringes of the academy and public life, had written a scathing review of *The Commonwealth of Nations,* the dismally long survey of British dominions and dependencies recently published on behalf of the Round Table under the name of Lionel Curtis. Hobson publicly mocked the book's assertion that British government was good for alien subjects, and compared it to 'Prussianism'. Zimmern struck back on behalf of Curtis, the Round Table, and his own straining beliefs. 'You sneer at the idea of our standing up for what we think best; but what else is a sincere political thinker to do? … Surely the important thing is to find out whether the claim [for British genius] is true and how far i.e. to find out what are the fundamental principles of human government, and then to associate as many nations as possible, in their promotion'.[42] Universalism and particularism, confidence

and doubt, did battle in Zimmern as he attempted to answer Hobson's disorienting critique.

The next chapter will explore the significance of historical and policy contributions made by Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland in the 1920s. The following section sets up the stakes of those efforts, taking on the Round Table's approach to imperial and international politics as formulated in the crux of the First World War, and the terms of their 'mobilization' during those fateful years. The group's major theoretical and practical contributions, which continue to absorb political theorists and historians today, revolved around the concept of 'commonwealth'.[43] While the Round Table model of commonwealth was never made into explicit policy, it nonetheless requires attention in that it provided an 'elaborate historical narrative of empire' through which formal imperialism could effectively masquerade as internationalism'.[44] Indeed, it was on such grounds that Curtis's *Commonwealth of Nations* met and sought to evade accusations of Prussianism. What were the fundamental principles of human government? And how to associate as many nations as possible? Come the Great War and after, the Round Table, like so many of their colleagues at the interface of thought and policy, read backwards into current affairs. For years they had labored to confront the rise of great power competitors such as the United States, Germany, and Japan; the growth of disaffection and nationalist rebellion in the dependencies; and the seeming drift of the dominions from central imperial policy. 'This convulsion can scarcely fail to precipitate the Imperial problem, and to render our results available at an early period is a matter of extreme importance' Curtis wrote to Edward Grigg as hostilities broke out in 1914.[45] Those 'results' emerged as *The Commonwealth of Nations* in 1916: the first (and only) of an intended three-volume series 'meant to lay out, in baroque detail', as Jeanne Morefield aptly observes, the historical context underpinning the Round Table's model of imperial strengthening and consolidation in the twentieth century.[46]

Historical consciousness was central to the Round Table's vision of imperial reformation, as its members painstakingly crafted 'metahistorical narrative' to reconcile and promote fraught, even contradictory, political ends. As Morefield notes, the Round Table situated its idea of commonwealth in the historical development of exceptional yet universally relevant Anglo-Saxon culture and institutions, justifying 'the continued exclusion of nonwhite subjects from political representation' while rendering 'the Empire the logical solution to its own misdeeds'.[47] But where such

insightful appraisals, including Morefield's, fall short is in their insistence that the Round Table's worldview 'strategically emptied imperial history of its uncomfortable content', thereby eliding the gaps between particular and universal, political exclusion and democracy, making imperialism 'the eternal answer to the questions generated by empire'. As this book's preceding chapters have shown, imperial history was not 'emptied' of uncomfortable content; it was written to construct a realm without uncomfortable content. 'Empire' and 'imperialism' were constantly shifting terms for contemporaries. Invocations of 'constructive imperialism' of the Milnerite variety and the concept of 'organic union', rooted in the framework of Oxford idealism, were no mere acts of deferral or conflation.[48] Come the second decade of the twentieth century, the Round Table sought to confront the deeply unequal and multivocal imperial present not by making new myths, but by building on what they considered to be documentary, 'expert' accounts of the British Empire as coherent, natural community in which citizens achieved fullest realization —indeed, freedom—through the performance of duty which proved membership in that community. Those accounts, though, had been written about settler empire, for settler empire, at the purposeful historical exclusion of India and the 'dependent' empire.

By 1914, Lionel Curtis and his co-authors recognized the British Empire, first, as 'a complicated polity which embraces a quarter of the human race… people of every gradation on the human scale'. Second, Curtis identified that polity as a 'commonwealth', defined by its historical development.[49] The civilized world had always known two types of states, despotisms and commonwealths, the latter in which 'every citizen has a duty to every other citizen, viz., to recognize him as an end in himself and not as a means to an end'.[50] To reconcile such immense 'variety' with the ideal of a common and cooperative subjecthood, Curtis embarked on a sweeping historical survey which both validated the existing delineations of imperial history and also sought to incorporate previously excluded fields. 'Mankind may be compared to a stratified formation consisting of a series of graduated layers', he declared. 'The British Empire is a section of humanity cut from top to bottom, and a sample of every typical layer is contained in its jurisdiction'. Deep historical time, as revealed through archaeology, was essential to understanding temporal relativity, and the significance of the seemingly improbable or impossible interpenetration, of these layers:

> In the light of modern discoveries it can be stated without hesitation that the earth has contained intelligent human beings for not less than 500,000 years. It is only in the brief centuries at the close of this æon that means have been devised of establishing regular intercourse between the continents. For ages longer than the human imagination can picture the inhabitants of the different continents have lived in water-tight compartments, developing apart and influencing each other little or not at all in the process. In the main, therefore, the different stages of human development coincided, and to some extent, still coincide, with continents or groups of continents.[51]

While Curtis described 'different stages of human development' or different levels on the human timescale, his theory was unlike previous models of imperial history, in that it confidently presented those stages as existing in the world at the same moment, delimited by physical geography but comprehended in an emerging, as opposed to aberrational, global politics.

What was a 'commonwealth', historically, and how could it absorb peoples Curtis described as being 'uncivilized', in the case of 'tribal' societies in Africa and the Pacific, or civilized but based on theocracy and therefore 'despotic' as was 'natural to Asia'? The 'fundamental notion' of the commonwealth, Curtis claimed, 'is that society is at its best when able and free to adapt its own structure to conditions as they change, in accordance with its own experience of those conditions'. Freedom was 'the power of society to control circumstances'.[52] Commonwealths, as Curtis's sketch took shape, were essentially European commercial societies defined by local political participation and citizens' moral investment in the state, and by their capacity to respond flexibly to the inevitable disruptions created by their dealings abroad. 'Frankly, we must realize that the first effect of European civilization on the older societies is disruptive. …The older societies, hard and dry with age, burst when the still-fermenting wine of European civilization is poured into them'.[53] A commonwealth, then, had to transcend the volatility of modernity's engagement with the past. The British Commonwealth was the largest, most ambitious, and most important of the genre.

This revision of a historical framework previously based on buffered tiers and epochal distance openly brought Curtis and the Round Table into a degree of conflict with earlier thinkers. By identifying the British Empire as history's greatest commonwealth, but also prefacing its work on the challenges presented by mobility and exchange, Curtis built into his British Commonwealth two new features: the idea of differential belonging, and

the concept of the constant duty of the highest tier, of patience, guidance, and guardianship, toward the tiers below. Undoubtedly, this model rested on hierarchical and paternalistic foundations. Nevertheless, Curtis and the Round Table's formulation marked a critique of two previous generations of imperial federationists. 'Why the Empire cannot go on as it is… Is it worth preserving? What are its tasks in the world?' Such were the fundamental problems motivating study and advocacy by the Round Table. These mantras, and the concept of 'organic union', formed the core of Round Table doctrine.[54]

'Organic union' along federal lines, of course, bore family resemblance to imperial federation campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s, whose emphasis on organicism derived in no small part from idealist currents then prevalent. Moreover, it carried forward the notion that history itself had a meaning and character which was markedly consistent with that promoted by Seeley.[55] But whereas Seeley's subject, and the focus of his contemporaries and early predecessors, had been the expansion of an English state into Greater Britain, the Round Table now defined its business as the multiracial, polyglot state. The British Commonwealth, now, was the object moving in time, bearing forward Anglo-Saxon triumphs and the seeds of universal reform, toward the realization of history's divine logic. But how could Curtis and the Round Table change the subject of imperial history without losing that history's core rationale? The content of *The Commonwealth of Nations* belied the difficulty underlying their claims to comparison and inclusivity. Even though the introduction set out a model of diversity and stratification within empire, ensuing chapters only glanced at the 'relations between East and West' before launching into detailed accounts of North American colonization, commercial expansion, the inclusion of Scotland in commonwealth, and early struggles over Ireland. Based on thematic occurrence alone, 'commonwealth' might have stood in for an earlier generation's 'Greater Britain'.

Nonetheless, the Round Table believed its mandate was world-historical in an unprecedented sense. They reacted against the Edwardian-era schism, as discussed in Chap. 5. In contrast to previous federationists, they understood the British Empire 'as essentially diverse and multicultural'.[56] While they left white Anglo-Saxons atop a racial hierarchy, some members still felt these shifts to be deep and uncomfortable, and challenged Lionel Curtis's heralding of 'a vast, two-fold mission'.[57] R. H. Brand, for example, acknowledged 'two main objects why the Empire is worth preserving', but protested that Curtis was dealing with them in 'somewhat too one sided a

way'. To Brand, it was by means of empire that 'the existence of the white European races, and particularly the Anglo-Saxon branches of it' was to be 'fortified and their ideals, religion, methods of government, and civilisation preserved wherever they are now quartered on the globe'; that white races would 'better be able to live well', as 'the future of the human race depends so largely on the preservation intact and unmixed of the white European races'. Brand worried that Curtis and others were growing too distracted by the 'second object of the Empire', or the question of 'subject races'. But that problem was 'not the only object as the draughtsman [Curtis] is inclined to make it, for to argue thus would be just as if one argued that the whole object of the Church of England was to preach the gospel to the Kikuyus and the Hindus and that it had no duty towards the English race itself'.[58] For the Round Table, the acknowledgement of coexisting problems precipitated the newly urgent problem of coexistence. Some members ardently sought to engage imperial diversity. Others, like Brand, renewed their defense of the supposed interests of the English race. This tension was built into *The Commonwealth of Nations*.

The Commonwealth of Nations also reflected the Round Table's efforts to distinguish their model of human difference from 'the nagging specter of Prussianism'. But while some accounts emphasize the novelty of the Round Table's response to the 'need to avoid racial language', preceding chapters have demonstrated the extent to which this work was already done, or prefigured, for them. While their attachment to idealist state theory exposed them to accusations of autocratic sympathies,[59] their roots in Oxford New Liberalism and (in the case of Curtis) a Broad Church tradition which had also birthed Seeley, provided a quick antidote. England was different. England's career in the world was by providential design, expressed in laws whose growth mirrored the intentions of the divine. The growth not only of the British Commonwealth, but the preservation and growth of the American Commonwealth, proved this; and their joint histories revealed a centuries-long struggle against tyrannical states. Rewriting the American Revolution, the Round Table saw that in 'assisting the American colonies to revolt from the parent Commonwealth the French monarchy was concerned merely to divide the forces opposed to autocracy against themselves'. The Napoleonic conflict 'was one between principles rather than peoples. In England there had developed a system different from any in Europe.... Its future existence depended on the power to assert that claim; and the issue of the conflict was to determine

whether the principle of autocracy or that of freedom was to prevail in the outer world'.[60]

In the midst of global upheaval, the Round Table turned, seemingly paradoxically, to sedimentary narrative, starting in Ancient Greece, to tie together two themes: centuries of navigational, commercial, and settler expansion, and centuries of slow, constitutional English growth, the latter couched in the descriptions of E. A. Freeman. All motion pointed toward the gradual formation of the Commonwealth.[61] But *The Commonwealth of Nations* went further, locating those gradualist progress narratives within a triangular meta-history: the ancient world leading to modern Anglo-Saxondom leading to encounter and subject rule leading to the certain renewal of the ancient world—with a confidence unprecedented in British imperial theorizing. That said, the work of jointing and interfacing was still incomplete. Contrary to Morefield, the conflation of an Anglo-Saxon '"body of principles" first with the English Commonwealth and then with the Empire' did not assume that this was a polity defined by 'commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law'.[62] Rather, it proposed that the parts of that polity were moving toward those goals at different velocities. Acceleration was the name of the game, written against vast, sedimentary historical time.

For how was it that disparate groups 'isolated' in historical time nonetheless met 'inevitably', as Curtis characterized Britain and empire at the outset of the First World War? Curtis's answer was that dependencies had harkened to British rule: 'that these myriads should have acquiesced in a dominion which so small a country could never had kept inviolate if they had not, is due to the essential quality of its institutions'. Englishmen simply placed 'greater importance' to 'individual rights than anywhere on the Continent. But this characteristic is itself the product of the system rather than of the race…'.[63] The emphasis on the individual distinguished English rule from continental European. Moreover, it explained the supposed moral contrast between colonial portfolios in 1916. From this notion of singularity and innovation in history, the Round Table could confront the Great War in terms of a past structured along divine lines that could yet carry the empire through and beyond the devastations of the present. 'My conception, as you know, has been to make volume I treat of the past and volume II treat of the present', Curtis explained. 'In writing the chapters, however, which are to follow the American C-w- [sic], the fact has been brought home to me that this division is an unreal one. the only true division is between the past and the future…. To put the matter

in a nut-shell, my proposal is to abandon the old division between past and present as unreal and to substitute for it the division between the first British Empire and the second, which is a real one'.[64] Curtis elevated the past and the future, declining to reify competing claims on the unstable present that he believed could not do justice to the Round Table's concept of imperial meaning.

Among their many initiatives, Curtis and the Round Table continued gathering, debating, and spinning this history through 1918. Soon enough, they would bring their idealist, settler-colonial model of the past to bear on questions of interwar reconstruction, an effort that would yield bittersweet fruit over two decades.

Notes

1. Sidney Low, 'The New Orientation of History', *Fortnightly Review*, 99:590 (February 1916), 266–8.
2. Low, 'The New Orientation of History', 266; John Burrow, 'Images of Time: from Carlylean Vulcanism to Sedimentary Gradualism' in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young (eds.), *History, Religion, and Culture : Essays in British Intellectual History, 1750–1950* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206–10.
3. Low, 'The New Orientation of History', 269–70.
4. Ibid., 270–2.
5. Low, 'The New Orientation of History', 273–4; Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (1929, reprint, New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).
6. Low, 'The New Orientation of History', 274; Sidney Low to Thomas Frederick Tout, 14 September 1915 and 1 March 1916, Tout papers, TFT/1/733/11-23, the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, UK.
7. Low, 'The New Orientation of History', 274.
8. 11 November 1918, Royal Historical Society minute book, Royal Historical Society papers, University College London.
9. Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 36; Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1992), 24–52.
10. Reginald Coupland to Edward Grigg, 4 November 1914, MS Eng.hist. c.794, Round Table papers, Modern Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
11. 'Correspondence about bringing [the] case for war to [the] working classes', A. L. Smith papers, II D 1/2/ii, Balliol College, Oxford, UK.

12. Members of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History, *Why We Are at War: Great Britain's Case* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914); Taylor, *British Propaganda in the twentieth Century*, 36.
13. M. L. Sanders, 'Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War', *Historical Journal*, 18:1 (March 1975), 119–46; Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 35–51; Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State*, 33–39.
14. Linda Colley, *Namier* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); Stefan Collini, 'Idealizing England: Élie Halévy and Lewis Namier' in *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 67–84. The phrase is Halévy's, but as Collini points out, it captures the interpretive priorities of both historians.
15. Julia Namier, *Namier: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
16. Collini, 'Idealizing England', 79–80.
17. Lewis Namier to Philip Kerr, 11 August 1926, Rhodes Trust papers, RT/2704, Rhodes House, Oxford.
18. Lionel Curtis to Edward Grigg, 1 October, 17 October and 22 October 1913; Grigg to Curtis, 1 November 1913, Round Table papers, MS Eng. hist.c.807, ff. 20–24, 40–41, 67–68, 70–72.
19. Namier to Philip Kerr, 11 August 1926.
20. H. E. Egerton to Philip Kerr, 1 August 1926, Rhodes Trust papers, RT/2704.
21. Philip Kerr to H. A. L. Fisher, 11 August 1926, Rhodes Trust papers, RT/2704.
22. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S. W., on Wednesday, Jan 24, 1917 at 11:30 AM', Cabinet records, CAB/21/34, National Archives, Kew, UK.
23. John Buchan to Edward Carson, [September 1917], Ministry of Information records, INF 4/1B, National Archives, Kew, UK.
24. Ernest Barker, *Nietzsche and Treitschke: The Worship of Power in Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914) 4–5; Members of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History, *Why We Are at War*; J. H. Muirhead, *German Philosophy and the War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915); Nicholas Martin, '"Fighting a Philosophy": The Figure of Nietzsche in British Propaganda of the First World War', *Modern Language Review*, 98–2 (April 2003), 367–80.
25. Richard Sheppard, 'The German Rhodes Scholarship' in Anthony Kenny, ed., *A History of the Rhodes Trust, 1902–1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 370–380.
26. C. R. L. Fletcher, *The Germans, Their Empire and What They Covet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915).

27. H. E. Egerton, *Is the British Empire the Result of Wholesale Robbery?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), 1–27.
28. Ernest Trevelyan, *India and the War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), 1–27.
29. A. F. Pollard, *The Commonwealth at War* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1917), 76, 91–2, 96–97, 123.
30. This roster included L. T. Hobhouse and Alfred Zimmern speaking at LSE. 'Courses arranged at the teaching institutions of the University in Imperial Studies, 1915–1916', Ronald Montagu Burrows papers, KAP/BUR/113, King's College London Archives.
31. 'Report of the first meeting of the Propaganda Subcommittee, 25 February 1920', Cabinet records, CAB 27/84, National Archives, Kew, UK. Quoted in Thomas G. August, *Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890–1940* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 55.
32. 'Liquidation of Ministry of Information', [n.d.], Ministry of Information records, INF 4/1B.
33. P. J. Marshall, 'The First Historians of the British Empire at King's', [c. 1982], papers relating to A. P. Newton, K/PP007 7/1, King's College London Archives.
34. Ibid.
35. A. P. Newton, *Federal and Unified Constitutions: A Collection of Constitutional Documents for the Use of Students* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923).
36. 'Report of the Council of the Senate on an offer for the establishment of a professorship of naval history', 2 December 1918, papers relating the Vere Harmsworth Chair of Naval History, CUR 39.52, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK; 'Central University administrative correspondence file relating to the Harmsworth Professor of American History, 1920–1942', Oxford University Archives, UR 6/HAH/1, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK.
37. See Chap. 3 for Adams's affinity for E. A. Freeman and Teutonic germ theory.
38. Anthony Brundage and Richard A. Cosgrove, *The Great Tradition: Constitutional History and National Identity in Britain and the United States, 1870–1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 84.
39. Correspondence after January 1917, Charles. M. Andrews papers, MS 38, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives, New Haven, CT.
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41. C. P. Lucas, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire: Volume I*, 4, 17.

42. Zimmern to Hobson, 19 and 29 September 1916, Round Table papers, Mss.Eng.hist.c.817. Jeanne Morefield also cites the exchange in *Empires without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 100–02.
43. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*; Gorman, 'Lionel Curtis, Imperial Citizenship, and the Quest for Unity' and *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006), 39–76.
44. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 100–02.
45. Curtis to Grigg, 4 August 1914, Round Table papers, MS.Eng.c.808, f. 48.
46. Lionel Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Citizenship in the British Empire and into the Mutual Relations of the Several Communities therein: Part I* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1916); Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 100–02.
47. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 102.
48. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, John Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 10. See also Chap. 5.
49. Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations*, vi–vii, 1. The Round Table first printed and circulated the work privately in 1914.
50. Lionel Curtis, undated memo, MS Eng.hist.c.836, f. 91. Also cited in Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 110–11.
51. Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations*, 3.
52. Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations*, 3–12.
53. Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations*, 12–14.
54. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 112; R. H. Brand, untitled memorandum, 25 May 1914, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.803.
55. I adjudicate Morefield's complaint against Gorman by pointing to Seeley and Curtis's similar belief in the morality of a historical metanarrative which served as a frame for writing the history of empire. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, 39–76; Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 116.
56. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 110–16.
57. See also Chap. 5.
58. R. H. Brand, untitled memorandum, 25 May 1915, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.803.
59. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 102, 108.
60. Curtis, *Commonwealth of Nations*, 679–80.
61. Morefield, *Empires without* Imperialism, 119.
62. Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism*, 129.
63. Curtis, *Commonwealth of Nations*, 14, 173–75.
64. Curtis to Grigg, 1 August 1914.

CHAPTER 7

The Third British Empire

In a 1925 lecture at Columbia University, Alfred Zimmern proposed the 'Third British Empire' as the cornerstone of postwar international life.[1] Zimmern spoke as one of Britain's leading academics and minor statesmen. As we saw in the last chapter, polemical mobilization and the emergence of new propaganda and information apparatuses expanded roles for scholars, particularly historians, as experts, government servants, public diplomats, and social philosophers in Britain. On one count, imperial history emerged from the war as a newly professional, 'scientific' pursuit, following mainly on the settler-colonial lines laid out in the earliest years of the field. On another—and, this chapter contends, more revealingly—the pressures of the war and peace informed the attempts a of specific group of well-connected historical thinkers in 1920s Britain to mobilize historical narrative toward a wider political consciousness, in order to resolve what they believed to be the most pressing problems of the postwar world.

What, indeed, was the Third British Empire? As it never existed as subsequent historical fact, why should it matter? For historians and imperial theorists such as Zimmern, the First World War produced an acceleration of historical sensibility. The global convulsion of 1914–1918 had seemingly erased the remaining spaces of time and distance giving disgruntled 'Britannic' populations varying degrees of isolation from one another. The Third British Empire was Zimmern's and likeminded colleagues' earnest and innovative response to an imminent reckoning. This chapter investigates major articulations of that response across the 1920s. It finds that the formulation of a political logic for this new world order, essayed by

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DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-54850-4_7

Zimmern, Lionel Curtis, and Reginald Coupland, and tested by British politicians, revealed a deep tension between a language of rights and a racism based on historical difference. It also highlights the publicly oriented thinkers whose work embodied that tension, whereas a more methodologically meticulous but, indeed, reticent side of academic imperial history avoided open confrontation with such issues.

Historians of Britain's empire working after the 1960s may have been too close to that history's initial writing to question the politics of periodization. Although the mid-twentieth-century assault on the idea of a 'new imperialism' by Ronald Robinson, Jack Gallagher, and their students led to skepticism of efforts at breaking imperial history into discrete phases—in the words of Ronald Hyam, the 'standard practice' of 'trying to reduce disorder to chronological periods'[2]—this chapter argues that periodization, in the twentieth century, was no mere chalkboard tactic. The demarcation of imperial 'chapters' was instead an effort to harness historical knowledge to advocate lines of current policy. The Third British Empire was more than a phase and phrase. It was a historical conceit designed to do ideological battle. Its popularizer, Zimmern, developed the term as he sought to define a new form of imperial politics amidst the confusion of postwar reconstruction.

While the previous chapter described the Great War as a forge for British historical practice, discussion here considers the efforts of a more particular and influential priesthood as it confronted the implications of total war. From a wider moment marked by doubts about the purpose and future of dependent rule, the scope of an imperial state, and the very distinction between British and German war aims, there emerged new stakes for explaining the imperial past which would define the work of the Oxford Round Table group in the interwar years. Zimmern and Coupland, along with historian Reginald Coupland and journalists and policy mainstays such as R. H. Brand, Geoffrey Dawson, Philip Kerr, and, of course, Leo Amery, brought the practice of imperial history to bear on both academic institutions and governing circles in the years after the First World War. This chapter focuses on Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland, their interwar highs and lows, and their most important critics. All three were well positioned by the war's end to impact public and elite discussions about imperial and international politics. Zimmern, already well known as a prominent educationist and author, spent part of the war in high-level work at the Ministry of Reconstruction and the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. Curtis was widely recognized as the indefatigable operator of Oxford's imperial switchboard. He spent his days running

between collegiate, private, and government circles, launching schemes, compiling information, composing manifestos, and pressing acquaintances into service. Despite controversial interventions in Indian politics during the war, Curtis was nonetheless tapped to assist the Colonial Office in negotiating the Irish Treaty of 1922.[3] And both Curtis and Zimmern were prime movers behind foundation of the Royal Institute for International Affairs in 1920. Zimmern would take up the world's first professorship of international relations, at Aberystwyth, in 1919. Meanwhile, Reginald Coupland became the second Beit Professor of Colonial History—Egerton's successor, to the visible relief of some and the disappointment of others[4]—and the one avowedly professional historian of the Round Table group. But his impact beyond the historical profession would extend impressively into three decades, including service as an advisor to the royal commission on the Indian Civil Service in 1923–1924, and later, to the Burma Round Table Conference of 1931, the Peel Commission on Palestine, 1936–1937, and the Cripps Mission to India in 1942.

These were Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland's public profiles by the 1920s: Zimmern the internationalist who boasted impeccable academic and governmental credentials; Curtis the imperial zealot whose tentacles extended well beyond Oxford; and Coupland the celebrity/expert history professor. Their common roots went deep. Oxford was the base from which they built their influence. All three had begun adult life as classicists at New College around the turn of the century, fed on legacies of the idealist school that had formed around T. H. Green in the 1880s. Zimmern was Coupland's classics tutor at the turn of the century, and Zimmern's book, *The Greek Commonwealth*, earned worldwide acclaim when it was published in 1911. All three were affiliated, long-term, with the Round Table—that 'brains trust' and lobbying group emerging from Milner's Kindergarten devoted to binding Britain and the dominions after 1910.[5] Curtis, for his part, served briefly as Oxford's Beit Lecturer in Colonial History in 1912 before devoting himself to the Round Table's imperial federation campaign and tapping Coupland as new Beit Lecturer. Coupland went on to a productive tenure as the second Beit Professor from 1920 until 1948. The three shared similar educational, classical, and historical inputs. They influenced, promoted, and claimed complementary positions relative to one other at the intersection of government and academia. Even though the three, among themselves, held varying and sometimes seemingly incompatible visions for the imperial government,

they lived and thought as part of a wider group whose project was world order.

Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland are a unit worth studying in a more specific sense, in that their work in the postwar era, above that of other public intellectuals, marked a major shift in metropolitan historical understandings of Britain's empire. History was being written by the very figures seeking to transform that empire into a durable Commonwealth. Moreover, the imperatives of peace forced these thinkers to accelerate the inclusion of subject populations into a Britannic constitutional narrative from which Asians and Africans previously had been excluded. For the first time since Seeley published *The Expansion of England* in 1883), major authors were producing statements that considered territories under British authoritarian rule and self-governing 'dominions' in full relation to each other. Doing so required making sense of and defending a deeply iniquitous past.

From this vantage, Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland articulated a sense that history had accelerated with the war, throwing the empire's, and the world's, different populations together in a sudden and uncomfortable moment of judgment. They approached and studied that perceived crisis along three broad thematic lines: race war, American ascendancy, and the rise of misdirected nationalism. Such were the problems, it seemed, which would define the future of international relations and which demanded the careful cultivation of educated public opinion. And so Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland built a Third British Empire impervious to those three key issues they saw gripping contemporaries. By examining content of their response, we can also determine how arch-imperialists by today's estimation envisioned the end and ends of Britain's empire. They did not use the term 'decolonization', and certainly did not herald an abrupt end to the global British state. Nonetheless, all believed the empire had emerged from the Great War in need of scrutiny, reform, and rebirth. Their efforts to plot out the transition between Empire and Commonwealth, and to incorporate Asian and African populations in a calculus of local, imperial, and international politics, pointed toward a sort of apotheosis: the harmonious coexistence of all nations in which the British Commonwealth played a leading role.

Yet, as will be seen, their efforts opened up a more enduring problem. In the 1920s, Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland mapped out their script for imperial transcendence, founded on 'responsible government', according to a model of citizenship which had begun life as an idealist conceit suited

for Edwardian settler-world politics. This model morphed as its handlers confronted what they believed to be the underlying crises of the postwar period. By the end of the decade, their ideal of citizenship escaped them, growing into an ideal of separation, localism, and individual duty which further detached meaningful political change in the dependencies from the heart of imperial theory. As imperial historical theorists emerged from the war, righteous and emboldened, the settler-citizen ideal and its entailing rationale of temporal distance gained new purchase in debates about imperial transformation and world order. Negotiations over the future of imperial relations in which Round Tablers and their colleagues were involved in the late 1920s—namely, over Indian self-government and dominion status—ran aground on questions of political timing, human difference, moral responsibility, and internationalist doubt.

Oxford Innovators and the Postwar Horizon

In their efforts to establish a Third British Empire, Alfred Zimmern, Lionel Curtis, and Reginald Coupland were searching for order in what they believed to be a drastically altered world. Foremost among puzzles, as Zimmern, the classicist-turned-ministry darling and professor of international relations put it in 1925, was why Britain's empire alone had survived, of all the empires that populated the pre-war world. It would seem Zimmern failed to notice the persistence of French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonial empires among others, and ignored the addition of the mandate system. But in reality, Zimmern's omissions said more about his definition of empire than his misreading of current affairs. Empire was the construction of a permanent overseas community, usually diasporic, that both recognized a common authority and thrived under it. Invoking the 'spirit of liberty', Zimmern sought to explain how the British Empire could rise, repeatedly, above history. The empire was not one, chronologically, but three. 'Future historians' looking back would see that from the wreckage of the first colonial empire had emerged a second empire based on sea power and international commerce which 'reached the culmination of its power and development in the Great War'.[6] Coupland as Beit Professor of Colonial History likewise mused that 'Five Empires were involved in the War: only the British survived it'. Both writers concluded that by changing forms, the empire proved its worth: 'that this world-wide society of ours, whatever its deficiencies and anomalies, does somehow meet the human needs it exists to serve'.[7]

The polity that emerged from the fiery ordeal of the Great War had been fundamentally transformed, as these thinkers termed it, from an empire into the British Commonwealth, 'a procession' of diverse communities 'at different stages in their advance towards complete self-government'.[8] Yet the larger story was not as simple as these confident pronouncements. Global war and its jagged peace fundamentally transformed Zimmern and Coupland's sense of time. While they had begun to suggest structural changes for British imperial government both before and during the war, the dizzying events of 1918, and the clamor over the peace, heightened their sense of temporal dislocation. In his 1921 inaugural lecture, Coupland made a case for the reinvigorated study of colonial history. The war had permanently and profoundly changed the field of human existence, showing 'how the sundering spaces of the world have shrunk before the swift advance of science' and 'the lives of all its peoples… brought intimately close together':

> A fine ideal, a perilous illusion, a resonant phrase may be enunciated one day in London, Paris, Washington, Moscow: and on the morrow, oddly transmuted… it is caught up and does its work for good or ill in India, Bokhara, Persia, Anatolia, Morocco, Mexico, South Africa—where you will.

These were perilous times, and scholars and statesmen had to keep a firm grip on underlying political mores if 'the intellectual equipment of mankind was to keep abreast of its growing moral and material needs'.[9] Curtis, meanwhile, embraced the acceleration of global politics as an opportunity to hammer out new federal relations for the multiracial Commonwealth, his enthusiasm stemming from his faith in a higher power working through human affairs. As he had proclaimed in 1916, the otherwise inexplicable entanglement of 'the most democratic countries in the world' with 'ancient and primitive communities' was 'the consequence neither of chance nor of forethought [but] the result of the deepest necessities of human life. … to establish ordered relations between most different races of men ordained by Providence to dwell together on one planet…'.[10] God's plan was revealed as the empire rallied to war between 1914 and 1918; the convulsive nature of the peace only served to confirm Curtis's reformational suspicion.

Though united in their sense of historical transformation, Curtis, Zimmern, and Coupland differed in their onward prescriptions. All three thinkers supposed Britain's empire might serve as an anchor for the world in a time of flux.[11] But Curtis insisted that the creation of a future world

state first required the establishment of imperial federal government. Zimmern was fundamentally opposed to formal union and sought institutional security in the international community. Where they did see eye to eye was the importance of abolishing war. Whether the British Empire, an independent international organization, or a world state was best fitted to this task, only the study of facts could reveal the right course. Coupland explained, as newly appointed Beit Chair, that 'politics is a science as much as an art; and we cannot with impunity omit to look [ahead] before the crisis is upon us, and prepare ourselves to solve it by scientific study'.[12] Both Zimmern and Curtis, meanwhile, spearheaded the founding of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs), which professed to encourage 'scientific study' and was 'precluded by its rules, from expressing an opinion on any aspect of International Affairs'.[13]

Ultimately, all three responded to the perceived imperatives of postwar imperial and international reform by promoting social scientific institutions that persist today. They attempted to reroute discussion of imperial relations away from questions of finance and defense that dominated public debate to the political arena, insofar as those problems could be disentangled. While giving a nod to the significance of economic factors in international life, all three sought to define a science of human relations that did not depend on trade or the distribution of wealth. As committed classical Hellenists, inspired especially by Zimmern's pre-war work, they believed the key lay in an ideal of citizenship derived from ancient Greece. This conceptual backdrop would interact fatefully with the three major problems that preoccupied Coupland, Curtis, and Zimmern after 1918.

'The Authentic Armageddon'

Racial antagonism, or the fear of 'race war', was central to Zimmern, Coupland, and Curtis as they planned for the future after 1918. It expanded their notion of international relations and informed their pleas for the abolition of military conflict. It launched new historical traditions for understanding the forces that had brought Europe into contact with Asia and Africa in the first place. It also, by the 1920s, provided a compass for their definition of what would constitute a successful end of empire and transition to commonwealth—a hazy theory of decolonization, as it were, before its time.

'The world is one', Coupland announced in his Beit inaugural.[14] Here was a marked shift from the ideas current in Oxford's pre-war imperial

circles, when it had been acceptable to study and celebrate the British Empire as preserving 'intact and unmixed… the white European races' across the world.[15] But in 1921, Coupland pleaded 'that no student of history and politics ought to leave this University without some knowledge of the record and the function of the British Commonwealth in Asia and in other parts of Africa than the Dominion in the South'. A new specter, which Coupland termed the 'Colour Problem', supplanted older visions of white exclusivity. What if through neglect, he asked, 'we wake to find ourselves confronted with another seemingly 'inevitable' conflict, but this time a conflict of colors, more terribly primitive in its impulses, more inexorable, more destructive than any of its predecessors, the authentic Armageddon, stamping out in blood and ruin the last hope of civilization? Coupland assured his listeners that he was 'not trying to make anyone's flesh creep'. But it was idle to ignore reality.[16]

Despite the success of British and international leaders in limiting their postwar concessions to the demands of Asian governments and nationalist movements,[17] Zimmern, too, pointed to the 'inter-racial relations'—the division between white and non-white peoples—as one of three possible triggers of war, alongside economic competition and nationalism, in his 1925 speech at Columbia. In his view, the West's failure to resolve its own contemptuous attitudes and enact real reform only heightened the risk of conflict:

> The prejudice that is evoked… is the raw material of the next war—the inter-racial war, the war that haunts every student of international politics. And what a war! Can you imagine any more futile conflict? …to fight another nation over a question of pigmentation is to go right behind the religious wars of the Middle Ages back to the Age of Darkness. It is a war between two species of human animals—a war to kill, because conversion is physically impossible.[18]

Beneath their warnings about racial hubris and looming crisis, the fact remained that Zimmern, Coupland, and Curtis saw race as a definite category. Yet while professing to be aware of the dangers of biological or static, popular racism, they sought a deep historical frame for intervening in the 'race question'. This outlook predated 1914 and had determined the shape of their wartime research. Curtis had spent the last years of the war studying ways of incorporating India in a future imperial settlement, certain that Indians, unlike Africans, had reached a sufficient stage of development

to be charged with their own political affairs.[19] Coupland, to an extent, followed Curtis's lead, editing the *Round Table* journal during Curtis's absence in India and refereeing Curtis's manic dispatches.[20] By 1921, he could confidently proclaim that 'Nature and circumstance have made the races different in more than in colour—different in religion, in philosophy, in experience and tradition and ideals: and these differences cannot be harmonized simply by wishing it so. They must be studied, they must, as far as possible, be understood'.[21]

Rather than 'wishing away' the troubles of British rule in the dependencies, Coupland set out to explain how that rule took root, and find in its inner dynamics the salvation of the future. After dipping briefly into revolutionary-era Canadian-American history—a topic perhaps too much associated with the tedious first phase of the Beit program—Coupland devoted himself to analyses of British Africa.[22] His works accounted for Britain's unfortunate involvement in the slave trade as well as its redemption through the rise of humanitarianism and the anti-slavery movement in the eighteenth century. This awakening, Coupland maintained, introduced the concept of trusteeship into British political life, and permanently shaped Britain's posture toward the rest of the world. Nineteenth-century explorers brought civilization to the African interior; proconsuls devoted their careers to the welfare of the natives and to the repulse of Arab slavers on the east coast.[23] As baneful as the consequences of Euro-African contact had sometimes been, at least the 'invaders' had brought Africa into the estimation of human time.[24]

While Coupland spun a studiously optimistic history of the British in Africa, he and his colleagues recognized the challenges posed to the postwar imperial order by questions of race elsewhere. Well before his service on commissions to India, Burma, and Palestine, Coupland identified the likeliest sparks of 'race war' in Japan and India. Such a clash 'might well happen if the wisdom of Japan were beguiled by militarist dreams which have lost (let us hope) their charm in Europe…. And again it might well happen if Mr. Gandhi or his disciples could persuade the untutored multitudes of India that the East cannot profit by contact with the West…'.[25] Zimmern raised similar concerns. Racial equality should be reintroduced to the League covenant, on lines suggested by the Japanese in 1919, to prevent racial antagonism. On the other hand, Gandhi's 'spinning-wheel philosophy'—'*How much* of the West should the non-white peoples accept?'—demanded a corollary—'how much should we accept from the non-white peoples?'[26] This dialogue seemed to stall by the 1930s, when the

refusal of Gandhian nationalists to engage on British terms led even the more radical Curtis, earlier in favor of letting Indians settle affairs for themselves, to declare that constitutional reform in India should be further postponed.[27] The anxiety over 'race war' in the 1920s persisted into the 1930s, heightened by the spectacle of Japanese aggression in Manchuria. But it was also tempered by disengagement—by the sense that, for all that the world might be 'one', international politics still held different races in separate theoretical and constitutional compartments, a fact embodied in the 'progression' of the Empire/Commonwealth.

America: Fable and Future

Alongside racial conflict, Anglo-American relations and the lessons of American history consumed Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland as they contemplated international politics after 1918. The three theorists were generally at peace with America's emergence as financial and military titan. After all, they had come of age in the environments of New College, Milner's Kindergarten, and then the Round Table, nurtured by a tradition which sought the keys to imperial strength in unity. With the publication of F. S. Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton* in 1906, the example of American federalism had emerged as a fetish for those seeking a working constitutional, defensive, or fiscal union of Britain and the settler colonies.[28] For all its trials and tribulations, the story of the American union stood the test of the Edwardian years and First World War. By the time of the peace, these Oxford-trained planners could embrace American ascendancy as no less than a marker of Commonwealth exceptionalism. The loss of the American colonies, as Zimmern explained, had not meant disaster but transcendence, in that it ushered in the Second British Empire.[29] For a formula by which to guide the third, Zimmern, Coupland, and Curtis once again harkened back to what perhaps had been the world's most successful acts of decolonization, the American Revolution and the creation of the United States.

This embrace of America meant using U.S. history to sway British metropolitan and imperial populations, as well as winning the hearts and mind of American listeners. Curtis, Zimmern, and Coupland all visited the United States during the 1920s, and they frequently included American materials in their British lectures.[30] Such an approach mattered for both material and moral reasons. American isolationism had run a spear through early British calculations for the peace. It also confronted British imperial

reformers with the added burden of justifying rule in the dependencies against skeptical, sometimes hostile, U.S. opinion. Curtis, of the three, was the most dismissive of American views, and tried to configure the problem so that the British Commonwealth could forge its own way in politics. The United States, with no sense of wider world history, would follow apace once the path of international governance became clear.[31] Curtis did, however, embrace the American example of federalism, as well as the lessons of the Union for resolution of the 'race question', a point to which this chapter will return.

Zimmern and Coupland, significantly, devoted greater attention to America than Curtis. Zimmern, active in reconciling the League of Nations with the idea of Empire/Commonwealth, also perceived imperial Anglo-American relations as a permanent field of work.[32] After all, it was a New York audience that he tried to persuade of the vitality of the Third British Empire in 1925. Moreover, Zimmern was bent on recovering American political thinking from Wilsonian misdirection. Wilson had merely picked up the phrase of self-determination 'from the great mischief-maker, Lenin'. Wilson had inappropriately tried to solve the postwar crisis 'along lines of nineteenth-century political liberalism' with its shibboleth of the nation-state.[33] Americans, still supposedly operating in a vacuum by the 1930s, needed a hefty dose of civic universalism tempered by humility. 'It is only by a swing of the pendulum back to the medieval idea of Order, by putting the life of the community in front of the good life of private individuals and groups, that a way can be found out of our perplexities'.[34] Coupland, meanwhile, integrated in his evolving historical theory of empire the notion of joint American and Indian 'revolutions': the loss of the American colonies proved the iniquity of an old mercantilist system, and the soul-searching that engulfed men like Pitt and Burke in the 1780s produced, in quick succession, a newly accountable and idealistic system of government in India.[35] In the loss of America, the soul of the Second British Empire was saved.

Cultivating friendship between Britain and America reflected the political and economic stakes of cooperation. This outreach also seemed natural given the existing wartime and interwar connections between British and American academics, and historians in particular.[36] Yet in either the guise of incomprehension or of familiarity, Coupland, Curtis, and Zimmern's critiques of American race relations proved particularly revealing. Their assessments, rather than following one line, varied according to each theorist's federal or internationalist vision, revealing the changeable

nature of the 'race problem' during this period. Curtis, inspired by Hamiltonian federalism, looked to the Union victory in the American Civil War as proof that only a strong central state could resolve the centrifugal tendencies of a multiracial society, and prevent the clash of race against race.[37] Zimmern and Coupland, in contrast, were more circumspect. Zimmern especially warned against holding America as a positive example for race relations. Speaking to Americans, he refrained from condemning policies of segregation or immigration restriction in either the dominions or the United States. Although the North had once forcibly changed the racial policies of the South, 'I never knew a community which voluntarily signed its own death warrant… it is not for any student of politics… to transgress the famous maxim of Burke and to draw an indictment against the policy of a whole nation'.[38] But he kept America at arm's length, declaring to an Oxford audience that same year that 'an exclusive British-American relationship I regard as one of the most dangerous ideas abroad in our political circles at the present time. …It would be an alliance not of the English-speaking peoples but of the white English-speaking peoples (with a few non-English speakers included) against the claims, or supposed claims, of colour'. American encounters had revealed to him time and time again the warped, domineering tone of U.S. attitudes, and the inability of Yankees to realize the profound facts that confronted British planners. He recalled turning with asperity on one American who expressed cavalier Anglo-Saxonist cheer at the League's rejection of the Japanese amendment against racial discrimination. 'My dear lady', Zimmern had told her, 'you are forgetting that only one out of every seven of the subjects of King George has a white face'.[39]

Nationalism and Postwar Citizenship: From Universal to Local

With the war, history had accelerated. The communities of the world were fundamentally entangled in each other's affairs. Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland hurriedly forged theories to confront what appeared the most pressing requirements of the day: the reorganization of imperial and international government. The specter of race war, and American slipperiness, added to the burden. A third enormous problem, which they identified as nationalism, taken along those first two concerns, forced these theorists to articulate a concept of citizenship which promoted

international peace and warded against national chauvinism. It was part of their extended rejoinder to Hobson's old taunt that any belief in Britain's special genius for government was indistinguishable from 'Prussianism'. Ironically, as Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland confronted the task of selling their Commonwealth projects in opposition to nationalism, colonial unrest, and American isolationism, they ended up articulating a model for post-imperial citizenship based on individualism and division. This encounter produced new languages of political participation and belonging assumed to be applicable to all human societies, but that simultaneously sought to reclaim historical, if not actual, distance between different human groups.

Though they differed in their visions of world government, Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland employed strikingly similar talk of nationalism to illustrate the organic versus inorganic structures of politics. True nationalism and internationalism were not incompatible, they held; political consciousness had to start at the locality and grow outward to encompass a larger community. Coupland lectured that the problem of an 'overweening and perverted nationalism', as dire as that of racial conflict, arose 'from the fact that a nation (whatever it is) is not, as current usage of the term might seem to imply, the same thing as a state'. Zimmern argued that nationality was the 'group-consciousness' of which nationalism was just one outward expression: 'Again, a nation is not a race'.[40] As neither a state nor a race, the concept of nation had thus been defanged of two incendiary qualities. A nation was not, like the state, the ultimate end of human politics, at least as the Oxford classicists had enshrined it. But a nation was not an immutable fact, either, as was skin color; it was a 'consciousness' that could be molded by education and communication.

Based on this distinction, these theorists constructed a theory of politics that demanded two things of the citizen. The first was loyalty to a supranational state, and ideally to a world state, in either the spiritual sense as Zimmern conceived it, or the material embodiment for which Curtis lobbied. But holding up this canopy was the pillar of the local: citizens had to develop an elementary sense of duty to their fellows, which would translate into a celebration of tradition and place—the wholesome variant of nationality to which Zimmern referred. Dependent populations, in this equation, were trapped between the two requirements, of developing and demonstrating fellow-feeling while cultivating loyalty to international norms that still insisted that races had their separate place. Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland ultimately resolved the problem of racial difference

alongside that of nationality by insisting that uncomfortable questions were in reality defused by the local and peripheral nature of imperial life. Peripheralization enabled hypocrisy by any other name. Curtis advocated immediate 'responsible government' for Indians in 1916 but balked at Gandhian claims in 1932 because Indians had not yet developed civic structures at the local level.[41] Seeking to cure Americans and the white populations of the Commonwealth of their 'racial embarrassment', Zimmern confronted what he called '"the brother-in-law" complex', or the hostile challenge: 'how would you like to have a coloured man marry your sister?' Zimmern assured his listeners that 'The coloured people under the British flag are not asking to be loved by their fellow white citizens. They are not afflicted with the mania of watery cosmopolitanism'. They asked only for 'certain ordinary commonplace political and social rights' which could be enjoyed at respectable remove.[42]

These attempts to grapple with the changed circumstances of international life—to establish the requirements for individual citizenship, to keep politics local, to reassert racial and national difference while promising a science of cooperation—characterized a crucial shift in British imperial and historical theory in the 1920s. Curtis, Coupland, and Zimmern hailed the transition to Commonwealth, but even for the most ardent federalist among them, that polity had to be founded on, not in spite of, human division. Only through the core conversion of unpredictable populations to an idealist concept of individual citizenship could the ends of Britain's true imperial legacy be achieved. Terms of constitutional progress and responsible government propelled the project. But as the 1920s closed, pressures for reform exposed the difficulty of such choreography. British adherents of constitutionalism and gradualism who sought guidance and support from the Round Table would alienate a vast constituency, leaving some members of the group, namely Coupland, doubting the integrity of the hierarchal Third British Empire model.

'Equality, of Course, Is at the Root of All the Trouble': Simon and India Test the Third British Empire

By the late 1920s, Round Table members had climbed to public prominence. Edward Grigg had climbed from national journalism to advising the Prime Minister, then became Secretary of the Rhodes Trust before posting

off as Governor of Kenya. Philip Kerr, whom Grigg had succeeded as private secretary to David Lloyd George, in turn succeeded Grigg as Rhodes Trust Secretary, relished the work of outreach to American constituencies. R. H. Brand provided key counsel to international financial stabilization efforts. Geoffrey Dawson combined his tenure as editor of the *Times* (1912–1919, 1923–1941) with continued involvement in Rhodes Trust and imperial affairs. But in the realm of history as applied to policy, Curtis, Coupland, and Zimmern remained the vanguard, with Zimmern moving to the world's first international relations chair at Aberystwyth, and Curtis and Coupland being called upon by colleagues and the government to provide the intellectual framework for major statements of imperial policy. Increasingly, they found themselves consulting on questions, specifically concerning Ireland and India, which had for generations been excluded from mainstream imperial discourse but now seemed at the heart of the empire's postwar fate.

The Round Table's approach to Irish and Indian flashpoints had been comparatively forward-looking before and during the war. In 1913, Curtis despaired of Irish cooperation, but placed blame at the foot of English imperialism wrongly conducted.

> The principle of the Commonwealth depends for its relations upon the extent to which the men who live under it can put public interest before their own. It is one of the most significant warnings of Irish history that the Irish, wherever they go, are still conspicuous for their aptitude in perverting the institutions of self-government to their own material interests. That, I believe, is the direct result of the generations during which Irishmen were not treated as an end in themselves but as a means to English ends.[43]

Curtis pressed for local representation in a broad sense, in India as well as Ireland, for 'specific devolution' giving minor functions of smaller areas to Indian ministers 'responsible in the English fashion to an elected legislature'. By 1918, Coupland was writing to Brand that 'Zimmern and I agree with Curtis in desiring that the Round Table should definitely accept the policy of Home Rule all around', with Kerr willing to accept their position. 'Curtis's view is that the hope of a settlement [for Ireland] rests on the acceptance of it'.[44] Yet for reasons outlined in preceding sections, the Round Table became more circumspect in its ambitions to provide a 'guiding policy for India'.[45] The severe limitations of theorizing became apparent as Coupland and others were drawn into the particularly unstable

situation that developed in 1927 when the Baldwin government appointed the Oxford-trained barrister and Liberal politician John Simon to lead a statutory commission to investigate and make recommendations regarding the future of political reform in India. Simon, a fellow of All Souls and longtime correspondent of Round Table affiliates, quickly found himself the center of a firestorm surrounding the application of a gradational model of development, the very kind underpinned by the public statements of contemporaries like Zimmern and Coupland—the experts he would turn to in exasperation as the commission and its guiding tenets fell under fire.

The exclusion of any Indian members from the Simon Commission was a fatal misstep in a climate of growing political alienation.[46] In May 1927, American journalist Katherine Mayo's polemic *Mother India* had been released to immediate international controversy and to outrage across the subcontinent. 'Inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality… sterility of enthusiasm, weakness of life-vigor itself—all are traits that truly characterize the Indian not only of today, but of long-past history', Mayo declared. A depraved Hindu culture had rendered India unfit for self-government. Indians, at 'the age when the Anglo-Saxon is just coming into the full glory of manhood', were instead 'broken-nerved, low-spirited, petulant ancients; and need you, while this remains unchanged, seek for the other reasons… why their hands are too weak, too fluttering, to seize or hold the reins of Government?'[47] *Mother India*'s publication had, in fact, been timed to coincide with the formation of the Simon Commission. And when the Secretary of State for India, the Earl of Birkenhead, announced an 'all-white' commission that November, the parallels with Mayo's recent denigrations were lost on few contemporaries.[48] The ensuing scandal linking British officialdom and *Mother India* dogged the work of the Simon Commission. Indian party leaders decried the commission as a pretext for the imperial government to enshrine Mayo's crude logic as policy: 'petulant ancients' would be further excluded from the imperial community of self-governing dominions. British officials in India, especially with ties to the Round Table, fretted that Mayo's conclusions, if attributed to the Raj, would undermine even the loose goodwill bought by the 1919 reforms.[49]

Simon proved surprisingly out of touch with, in his own words, 'the hopes and feelings of the masses of men and women upon whom British administration in the past had conferred the blessings of order and settled government'.[50] As S. K. Datta wrote to Curtis in November 1927, 'The difficulty is to get a man like him [Simon] to appreciate that the psychology of the Indian situation is one that has to be reckoned with. You may talk to

an Indian until you are blue in the face about the four corners of the Government of India Act, but to no avail'.[51] While Simon expressed thorough commitment to the commission as a continuation of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the question remains as to how he utterly miscarried an appeal to 'psychology' and allowed the delegation and report which bore his name to go down as one of the twentieth century's most tone-deaf blunders.

Among other factors, Simon was operating with a distinct notion of imperial progress rooted in history. 'Let it never be forgotten', Simon told the Reform Club before sailing for India, 'that the cry in India for wider powers of self-government is the inevitable consequence of British history and British teaching'.[52] In turn, the authority of history and the question of dominion status coalesced as powerful themes around Simon's flailing attempts to legitimate his mission. Trying to make sense of the furor surrounding the mission and report, the sympathetic *Round Table* reflected on the purpose of Britain's long history in India, at first expressing a more inclusive vision but soon lapsing into the familiar tale of an archaic society surrendering to the light of modernity. The revolt of 1857 had failed 'as a society based on traditional beliefs will always fail when it enters on a struggle with one which has tapped the springs of genuine knowledge'. Compared to the writings of the two previous generations, which tended to locate British India in a medieval space, the *Round Table* by 1928 promoted India in time, comparing the communal relations between minority Muslims and majority Hindus as 'somewhat resembl[ing] those of Protestants and Catholics in the seventeenth century'. These travails bore heavily on the global moment: 'The problem of finding by trial and failure how in Asia and Africa public opinion can be brought into being in a form capable of controlling public policy is in fact the major problem of the British Commonwealth, and indeed of the world, in the epoch opened by the great war'.[53] The era of temporal distancing and initial inter-civilizational conflict might have passed, but the weight of the history hung heavily on judgments as to the fitness of subject populations for authoring their own future.

Under scrutiny and on the defensive, Simon turned to his Oxford contacts—to the Round Table, and then specifically to Coupland as Beit Professor—for vindication of the commission's findings as premised on a refusal to recommend dominion status for India. It had been Malcolm Hailey, an 1894 Oxford graduate, Round Table correspondent, and recently appointed Governor of the United Provinces, who advised the

Viceroy and Secretary of State to appoint no Indian members to the inquiry in the first place.[54] Hailey replied to Simon's plea with his own ardent defense. 'I have been made the target of a good deal of criticism, based on a suggestion that I am one of the persons guilty of attempting to draw a fraudulent distinction between the "realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire" and "the attainment of full Dominion status"'. The two categories must not be conflated, Hailey argued; for not all claims to self-government were created equal:

> …the Indian Government had not committed itself to any particular form of self-government [in 1919]; it contemplated a gradual progress toward a larger measure of control by her own people which would ultimately result in a form of self-government, differing possibly from that enjoyed in other parts of the Empire, but evolved on lines which took into account India's past history and the special circumstances and traditions of her component peoples.[55]

'Gradual progress' and intra-imperial difference served to dilute supposedly overweening ambition. Hailey warned that the distinction between 'responsible government' and dominion status was so nuanced that simple minds could be misled into thinking that 'Responsible government means Dominion status; Dominion status means independence; ergo, the Preamble to the [Montagu-Chelmsford Act] promises independence to India'. Hailey insisted that history showed something quite different. 'The actual attainment of responsible government in Canada came by slow stages'; and even then, the process of attainment for India, 'owing to her peculiar circumstances, and in the absence of that identity of sentiment and interest with Great Britain which made the evolution possible in the case of the Dominions, will inevitably be of even greater duration'.[56] In Hailey's counsel to Simon, homologies of childhood and intra-imperial difference provided a striking vocabulary for confronting Indian demands.[57] 'To English thought, translating the simile into constitutional terms, the first has reached Dominion Status, the second has not. …The difference here is only one of time. For Indian thought the real distinction is that between the member of a family, (whether a minor or of full age) who enjoys or will enjoy full rights in family property, and a subordinate member of the family who has some rights but no title to share in the family property'.[58] As Hailey saw it, 'English thought' was characterized by its ability to think in terms of time. 'Indian thought' recognized only status.

Simon continued to energetically marshal support for a model of political development that insisted on non-equivalency and the primacy of local conditions. Between 1928 and 1930, he canvassed historical and academic experts in Britain who might validate both the premises and findings of the commission's report. A. F. Pollard, founder of the Institute of Historical Research, replied in early 1930 to Simon's inquiry about the nature of German federation in the nineteenth century, merely suggesting 'points of resemblance between the problem then and there and your problem now in India…'.[59] George Trevelyan, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, wrote to offer his comparisons between Canada and India: 'Durham's solution marks an epoch and your report will, I fear, only mark a stage—perhaps a mere skirmish in the rear-guard action which Britain has to fight in India but (though the Indian Nationalist is unwilling to admit it) Britain, in this case, is really not fighting for herself more than Durham was'.[60] Rhodes Trust Secretary Philip Kerr, by then Lord Lothian, saw Simon's bracing conclusions as an opportunity to re-found Indian studies at Oxford:

> [T]he perusal of your first volume by any honest Indian mind must help bring their feet down to earth. …I should like to see you sometime about the Indian Institute at Oxford. I have an idea that that building, which has degenerated from the high hopes with which it was founded into being a mere school for languages, might be made an extremely useful factor in the future relations between India and Britain. It ought to be endowed so as to maintain year in and year out a dispassionate study of the evolution of Indian Government….[61]

'It would also', Lothian added, perhaps thinking of the Indian students who had sought an intellectual and social home at the Indian Institute, 'be a sanitary development from the point of view of Oxford itself'.[62]

But by mid-1930 and the release of the second and final volume of the Simon Report, Simon found himself in an impossible position. Current events seemed to be outpacing his scrupulously historically correct legacy. The commission's recommendations for provincial autonomy and federalism with the center under imperial control had been framed as the most advanced arrangements possible for Indian political development. But critics in Britain and India alike dismissed the report as outdated. The politics of urgency caught Simon off guard, especially as an international debate brewed over whether the Viceroy Lord Irwin had, in fact, offered

India dominion status in October 1929, in response to Congress demands for either dominion status within a year or a mass campaign for full independence. While Irwin sought to reassure Baldwin that dominion status meant different things to different parties—existing self-government to 'Englishmen' and a future commitment to Indians[63]—Simon nonetheless bristled with indignation. 'Now I see in certain quarters that the [commission's] Report is vitiated because it did not recognise that this Declaration transformed the position and created a new objective', Simon vented to Geoffrey Dawson. 'I cannot conceive how any one who desires to promote Indian self-government… can suppose that Gandhi's spade and bucket, or the Peshawar trouble, somehow prove that a detailed constitutional scheme worked out on federal lines somehow becomes out of date and not sufficiently advanced'.[64]

Simon then began a public counterattack, starting with the prestige papers. He could count on Garvin at the *Observer,* and Scott at the *Manchester Guardian*.[65] When it came to landing an authoritative and reliable defense in the *Times*, he redoubled his efforts to enlist Reginald Coupland. 'I really think that you should meditate a letter to "The Times" in commendation of the range and spirit of the Report', Simon wrote Coupland. He implored the Beit Professor to praise the merits of the report: that it substituted 'a constitutional scheme for general phrase', restoring order to a debate overrun by loose invocations of 'self-government' and 'dominion status'. The key, Simon told Coupland, was to convince the public that the report was in fact the best blueprint for 'dominion status', at least correctly understood.

> To any one who really understands how the great Dominions came to attain their present position, it will be obvious that the Commission's plan is [the only plan] which could lead to a federal dominion in India. The history of the Dominions shows that no error could be more profound than to suppose that their condition is static; it is a growth, and the result of a process, which in each case is appropriate to local conditions. It is no kindness to Indian aspirations for any Englishman to play up to the Oriental's liking for a phrase when what the Oriental really needs is more constructive ability which sympathetic Englishmen may help to supply,—and so forth.[66]

'Growth', 'the result of a process… in each case appropriate to local conditions': Simon borrowed heavily from the Third British Empire playbook. 'All this is, of course, very confidential', he assured Coupland, 'but it

is not written without very strong reasons'. Coupland politely refused, as 'approval of your great Report from an obscure professor appearing now would be a rather ridiculous anti-climax'. But Simon remained adamant, warning that the report's reception was imperiled and reiterating the import of professorial testimony to the 'real relation between the Dominion analogy and the Report'. Here, Coupland's intransigence revealed his own brewing concerns about the scaffolding of postwar empire. 'It is only on the "Dominion Status" question that I am qualified to speak', he agreed, but he would not let Simon push him toward a statement.[67] In the end, Coupland was only moved to open opposition against Simon's position by other *Times* letter-writers, namely John Buchan, who applauded the Simon Commission for refusing to recommend dominion status, saying Simon had shown 'the steps by which the Dominions arrived at their present position' and outlined a course for India 'to that same end'. Buchan ended, however, at the incommensurability argument: 'Indeed, there is no such thing as Dominion status. In the Dominions, there is a strong self-conscious national life, moving fast and altering by an inexorable biological law the forms which embody it. There cannot be a gift of status in this sense, for it is a stage in the process of growth'.[68] Against such sleight of hand, Coupland took up his pen, arguing that all parties—'Dominion Governments and our Dominion Office' included—needed to commit to the realization that 'there is such a thing as "Dominion Status" which has come into being since the War and has been defined in the "Balfour" Report of 1926'. As he told Simon,

> Buchan, of course, is right in arguing that in the broadest sense the 'status' or footing of any country changes with its growth. But 'D.S.' has a narrower technical meaning, primarily applying only to the 'interimperial' relations of the nations of the Brit. Commonwealth, and it can be summed up in the word 'equality'. And this will never change.[69]

In or around 1926, in Coupland's calculation, imperial relations had crossed a threshold. 'Dominion status' meant equality within empire, immediately. There was no going back. But this led Coupland to the present impasse. 'Equality is, of course, at the root of all the trouble. If Indians would only realise that we do not regard them as a "subject" people, that we do not want to be their "masters", that we consider them as a great Asiatic people… and that we only want to help them to stand on their own feet and in principle or potentiality we admit "equality"—' he broke off. '[But] that is

asking too much: and so we must go on with our constructive work as best we can'.[70] Coupland placed the onus on Indians to recognize British intentions. But he nonetheless distanced himself from the Simon Commission, now clearly troubled with the hollowness of its basic premise —deferral—when political urgency could no longer be ignored.

Coupland's public intervention did not appear in the *Times* until November 1931, in the midst of the Round Table Conference, and when it did it spoke to the integrity and transferability of 'dominion status', its development through practice, and the urgency of its conferral to India. '[Complete] responsible government within the Empire', as promised in 1917 and 1919, 'is only another way of describing Dominion status in its full and final form, or… Equal Partnership under the Crown. The British people should clearly understand that it is the kind of relationship with the people of India to which they are ultimately committed. Pledges may be frankly withdrawn. They ought not to be evaded'.[71] To Coupland's chagrin, the politics of evasion, rooted in delay, had overtaken responsive commitment. It was dawning on him that the temporal matrix of the Third British Empire, as it rested on gradation, localism, and 'peaceable' distancing, was untenable.[72]

Simon, for his part, emerged embittered from the experience. Excluded from Round Table Conference proceedings and still seeking vindication, he and like-minded opinion makers turned to the task of winning Canadian and U.S. favor for a more paternalistic British approach to India. During a five-week trip to India, Simon found the British case 'not presented at all… Irwin's apologetics and colloquing with the Congress people had done endless harm. Gandhi was a sort of Indian George Washington and his Salt Tax bucket and spade was the Boston tea party all over again. … I feel greatly disturbed', he told J. L. Garvin, 'at the complete failure of official Britain to justify [sic] in a situation where all that is needed is bold and plain statement of the fact', no matter 'how elementary one has to be in dealing with the New World'.[73] In the end, Simon again sought comfort from sympathetic sages. As 1930 drew to a close, he reached out to George Trevelyan at Cambridge to ruminate on the legacy of Trevelyan's great-uncle, Thomas Babington Macaulay, with regard to the latter's writings on education and political development in India. 'If TBM had been over 100 years later than the actual date in which it pleased Providence to send him into the world', Trevelyan replied soothingly to Simon, 'he would certainly be helping to interest people here in India…. And he would also help to clarify people's thoughts on policy—I can well believe in a direction that would not be very far from yours'.[74]

The Decline and Fall of the Third British Empire

Coupland's exchange with Simon was but one indicator of the friction and division then entering into the Round Table's historical and policy work. Postwar faith in Britain's imperial apotheosis hit a rut by the 1930s, as Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland confronted international realities contrary to their plans and teaching. Coupland, the history professor, moved through this turn with the most equanimity. While continuing to write on American history and anti-slavery, reaching out to American audiences through the late-1920s, Coupland's emergent determination to explain the reasons for British rule in Africa led him in the direction of policymaking. By 1939, he was telling Margery Perham, inaugural fellow of the recently founded Nuffield College and rising doyenne of colonial studies, that 'You & I constitute the "Empire Department" … Ideally Nuffield ought to produce within 10 years a re-examination & re-evaluation of the Empire—particularly the Colonial Empire. If that could be well done, it might go far to determine the trend of policy'.[75] Questions of policy mattered more and more as Coupland's perception of contemporary colonial administration in Africa diverged from the sanitary logic he sought to find in the past. His massive biography of explorer John Kirk, which made Kirk's career a synecdoche for Britain in Africa more generally, left Coupland exhausted. He explained as much in 1926 to Flora Shaw Lugard when she approached him to write a life of her husband, the famed African proconsul Frederick Lugard, who had popularized his theory of 'indirect rule'. Coupland's reluctance elicited a scarcely concealed barb: 'Perhaps you were naturally fitted to write the lives of Kirk and Wilberforce whose work was within that circumference of civilized diplomacy…. Perhaps my husband's life needs a biographer who has more actual experience of Africa itself'.[76] Coupland briefly reconsidered after a trip to East Africa in 1929, but the project went to Perham. Coupland expanded his search for meaning in British rule, publishing *East Africa and Its Invaders* and *The Exploitation of East Africa* in 1938 and 1939, surveying his subject from antiquity to the establishment of the British protectorate in 1890. Making sense of the present was a more difficult task, though, one he embraced as advisor to the Burma round-table conference in 1931 and as member of the royal commission on Palestine in 1936–1937. When it came to history writing, Coupland increasingly declined to carry the progressive narrative that had once dominated his scholarship up to the present. Policy, dogged study, ten-year

plans for Oxford to reform the course of colonial administration: these became his *modus operandi* by the mid-1930s.

Curtis was at the other extreme. In the early 1920s, he had been supremely confident that Britain and the world would come around to his vision of peace and order based on a unitary supranational state. But his expectations swung perilously in the direction of Armageddon by even the mid-1930s. Curtis's heady efforts to apply constitutional models to the intractable problems of Anglo-Irish and Anglo-Indian relations amounted to very little indeed when confronted with the outbreak of civil war in Ireland after the treaty of 1922 and the deterioration of negotiations between British planners and Indian nationalists throughout the 1920s, epitomized by the Simon misadventure.[77] Congress radicals such as Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru led the push for complete independence, while a moderate faction, influenced by Motilal Nehru's earlier report, continued to press for dominion status. Following unrest in Bombay and Calcutta, and the disillusionment wrought by the parliamentary commission, space opened for Gandhi and Congress to commit to *purna swaraj*. The Congress resolution of late 1929 marked a crucial turning point; the main body of Indian nationalism no longer sought partnership in the British Empire.[78] For Curtis, the moment marked an undoing of many years'—if not much of his life's—work.

The 1930s brought little to diminish Curtis's distress. As the world seemed poised to descend again into earth rivalry, armed conflict, and racial war, Curtis turned ever more ardently to amateur history as a guide to divine purpose in dark times. Curtis's *Civitas Dei*, or *The Commonwealth of God*, appeared in three volumes from 1934 to 1937.

> Since the Great War the world has relapsed into a growing confusion comparable only to that which St. Augustine was facing when he published his *De Civitatae Dei*, at a time when Greco-Roman civilization was relapsing into the Dark Ages. … *The present is really the sum of the past.* … I was thus led to work on the widest canvas which the framework of human records will support; but with no such equipment of historical training or reading as the task required.[79]

What ensued was a chaotic account of Britain's place in the world. Throughout time, only England had realized the truest guiding principle in public affairs, that the state was a precondition to self-government. From this premise emerged the true meaning of political science, which in

Curtis's deeply Christian, liberal Anglican outlook was 'worthless unless based on an estimate of ultimate values'. The English state, for all its setbacks, was the vector for the realization of global Commonwealth.[80] But England itself was now weak in ways that recent modern chroniclers like Seeley could not have foreseen, its sacred mission increasingly submerged by international jealousy and crisis.[81] The years 1933–1934 had brought 'the collapse of security' in the face of fascism, communism, and Asian imperialism. The only position left was to ponder 'how reason extracts hope from despair and converts failure into triumph'—in other words, to seek 'the meaning of Easter'.[82] As the 1930s wore on, Curtis devoted himself to research for *Civitas Dei*, lobbying for the federation of the British Commonwealth, and minor interventions in Chinese and South African politics.

Zimmern, who returned to Oxford in 1930 as the Montague Burton Professor of International Relations, moved in an opposite direction from Curtis, embracing internationalism in the form of the League of Nations. Like Curtis's, Zimmern's earlier designs met their nemesis in the 1930s. Despite his best efforts to identify a pure, local nationalism on which the framework of international cooperation could be built, Zimmern by 1934 saw states conducting increasingly chauvinistic domestic and foreign policies in terms of relative power and territorial competition. Even Britain and its empire were not exempt. Zimmern grew detached from the British Empire as an arena for institution-building, but remained optimistic about the possibility of establishing international structures on other bases.[83] But as Curtis, too, was concluding by 1934, Zimmern saw there could no longer be any pretense toward supremacy on narrowly English, or British, lines. The Great War had signaled a profound shift in military capabilities; the world depression decisively ended all residual nineteenth-century illusions 'that the world in which [men] carried on business was held together by the so-called laws of political economy… that comfortable margin of confidence… has been missing so sorely during the last twenty years'.[84] What, then, was to replace British naval and financial power? Zimmern grew increasingly convinced that the British Empire could not fill this void. Imperialism, he believed, had devolved like so many other national postures into sectarianism and flag-waving. He criticized the theory, promoted by none other than Leo Amery, that loyalty to the British crown was a sufficient bond. '[To] lay it down for a constitutional monarch in an era of democracy and republicanism is to mistake the shadow for the reality, or, to be more precise, to mistake the symbol for that which it symbolizes'. No longer the concrete,

stadial procession that Zimmern held it to be in 1925, the empire in 1934 was little more than a constellation of practice and feeling. 'It is only in spiritual values that the British Empire can be defined. It is a habit of mind acquired through common experience… a political tie, based on common experience in the domain of public affairs'.[85] That political tie should not preclude other loyalties; those spiritual values should lead their adherents to seek means of realizing cooperation outside the nation or empire. 'The impulse towards freedom [in international affairs] has here reached an impassable limit', Zimmern wrote. 'It is only by a swing of the pendulum back to the medieval idea of Order, by putting the life of the community in front of the good life of private individuals and groups, that a way can be found out of our perplexities'.[86] In Zimmern's mind, world order could only emerge from cooperation between welfare states, mindful of ensuring the good life, for their own citizens. Relations between these states, however, could not be left unregulated, and into the late 1930s he worked to popularize the League of Nations as the mechanism through which the rule of law would be established in the interstate realm.[87] Critics such as E. H. Carr attacked Zimmern for his transparent snobbery and out-of-touch idealism. Whatever that truth, Zimmern's work, like Curtis's, reflected an earnest search for salvation. By the late 1930s, however, the internationalist and imperialist could no longer cohabit the same ideal.[88]

Empire Revised

The concerns around which Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland pinned their historical discussions of the Third British Empire did anything but disappear as the interwar years wore on. Was union in any sense possible for the peoples of the British Empire? Would Asia rise in a fearsome military display against the West? Would color battle color? Whither nationalism? America? All three thinkers invoked the Commonwealth or Third British Empire as a solution to those concerns in the 1920s, squaring the problems of the multiracial empire with the wider concerns of international life by valorizing local citizenship based on racial and historical difference—static, local, and individual—insofar as such localism served a civic enthusiasm for global humanity. But as we have seen, their writings and activities by the mid-1930s revealed a camp wracked with doubt. Coupland, in search of a fitting end to Britain's puzzling and fateful embrace of Asian and African subjects, gravitated increasingly to the study of colonial administrative policy. Zimmern turned away from nation and empire toward the

international. Only Curtis doggedly continued to promote the federation of the British Empire/Commonwealth as a solution to global crisis—a last chance for salvation, a leap of faith in a dark world.

Meanwhile, new critics came forward in the 1930s whose interventions heralded both the passing of Third British Empire and the impasses that characterized its wake. Most notably, Margery Perham and Keith Hancock denaturalized Zimmern, Curtis, and Coupland's assumptions while trying to intellectually and materially harness imperatives for imperial transformation. Perham is now remembered as the mid-century's leading expert on British African affairs in the era of independence, a formidable don, indefatigable researcher, and the first fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford.[89] Hancock was the precocious young historian who arrived in Oxford in 1922 as a Rhodes Scholar and was promptly swept into the inner sanctum of All Souls as its first Australian fellow, winning the confidence of various senior figures. Indeed it was Curtis, in a moment of manic delegation for Chatham House, who suggested to Hancock the plan of a study which would become Hancock's own masterwork, *The Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, and which would end up throwing into fundamental question the premises on which Curtis and the elder Round Table had established their lives' work.

Perham's early career embodied the divide at Oxford between colonial history as it had emerged along constitutional lines in the first decades of the twentieth century, and an increasing institutional anxiousness to make colonial studies relevant to the uncharted terrain of interwar world affairs. Having successfully lobbied the Rhodes Trustees for a traveling scholarship to study native administration in Africa from 1929 to 1932, Perham returned to Oxford and a lectureship in colonial administration established by Coupland and Jan Smuts at Rhodes House.[90] By the late 1930s, Perham had, to Coupland's annoyance, been tapped as official biographer of Frederick Lugard. In Lugard's vision, British administrators had two duties: 'to protect indigenous subjects, and to promote economic development for the world at large'.[91] Perham became his acolyte as well as biographer, remaining for the rest of her life a relentless and vocal exponent of what was in her view conscientious colonial administration. In the 1930s, her brand of imperialism, and Lugard's, led her into direct confrontation with Curtis's schemes for using African administration to bind the historically self-governing colonies in cooperative governance of 'backwards' races. The rift had opened in 1930, when Philip Kerr on behalf of the Rhodes Trustees tried to convince Perham to alter the findings of

her African journey so as to support the Round Table view which favored leaving South and East African settlers to manage their own 'native' affairs, and to allow free commerce rather than colonial administration to develop the African social landscape. 'The tendency of people interested in the native, I think, is to try to protect him from the strains and troubles inevitable from contact with Western civilization', Kerr wrote.

> Whether we like it or not, Africa is going to undergo the same kind of economic revolution in the next hundred years that north America [sic] did after the advent of the Anglo-Saxon, that South America has done since the advent of the Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians, that China and India are undergoing to-day despite the protests of Gandhi and others, who see the evil in the modern world and idealise, perhaps, the good in the old world. … that, as I see it, is the iron law of history, and never more than in the present day.[92]

To Perham, Kerr's 'iron law' was rusted through. She rejected his conclusions as fundamentally bound up in an outdated and pernicious view of the relationship between settlers and natives that preferred metropolitan non-interference in the service of cultivating white loyalty to Britain. Kerr's 'false sentiment' and 'fatalism'

> paralyses criticism, and lulls conscience. I do not see why laissez-faire which is losing its domination in England should cross the ocean to find a kingdom in Africa; if we have decided that we must and will control economic forces at home in the interests of society as a whole, why not all the more in Africa, where we still have, largely, a clean slate, where vested interests are not universally established, and where beneficent autocracy still holds sway over large areas?[93]

Perham railed against the assumption that minorities in East and Central Africa 'selected by the haphazard lot of emigration must by divine right of race, govern the black population'.[94] Kerr was impressed by Perham's determination and ensured that she would have free rein to write up her report without the oversight of the Rhodes Trust. She did, however, lose the history lectureship she had left behind at Oxford before her Africa trip.[95]

Perham's polemic against the Round Table over questions of settler interests and direct colonial administration continued through the 1930s, and often to her benefit. Her forceful attack in the pages of the *Times* on

Lionel Curtis's plan for the early transfer of Britain's Southern African protectorates to the Union of South Africa won her international fame. Her reflections on South African native policy were damning, not just of the Union, but of (as she saw them) obscurantists like Curtis who continued to blindly pursue the myth of diasporic communion. 'The peculiarity of South Africa, compared with other Dominions, is that it made divergent claims upon our liberalism and our humanity: we could never, it seemed, do justice at once to the claims of white and black'. The question of native rights was postponed at Vereeniging; no comprehensive settlement ever followed, and the Statute of Westminster and the South African Status Act rendered attempts to protect native and non-white rights 'constitutionally worthless'.[96] Liberty for some in the Round Table's 'organic' and 'evolving' Empire-Commonwealth was, emphatically, not justice for all.

And so a divide appeared in the 1930s, not between internationalists like Hobson and imperialists like Curtis as had been the case in 1917, but now between the diasporic fetishes of the Round Table and the autocratic humanitarianism of colonial reformers like Perham. In Perham's own, later unpublished words:

> In the first decade of the century a liberal policy towards the Africans was incompatible with the main purpose the Kindergarten were commissioned to serve, the unification of the Europeans on the morrow of war. [In] the extensive writings of Milner's men it is hard to find much appreciation of the potential rights and interests of the subordinate peoples who figure mainly as labour, to be obtained in adequate numbers & administered with efficiency. …It would seem that on the native issue Milner sounded the trumpet on that uncertain note which fails to summon men to battle. In a speech of farewell in Johannesburg… his expression was more of doubt and uncertainty than of hope. He made the practical administrator's ritual condemnation of that whipping boy, 'Exeter Hall' and its 'claptrap' [to which] he added, to the elevated steps reached by the white man 'the vast [part] of the black population may never be able to climb at all'.[97]

These were the issues on which colonial studies split from the Third British Empire, with its settlerist core, in the 1930s.

The last word before the storm belonged to Hancock. Curtis had proposed Hancock compose a handbook on dominions and dependencies, structured along broad economic and political lines, for students seeking to understand the logic of Commonwealth evolution. But Hancock had ideas of his own.[98] His *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* grew into a

magisterial, three-volume account which entwined religious, social, economic, political, and constitutional histories of the various components of the empire after the Great War. Moreover, it emphasized the challenge and reality of intra-imperial division as no comparable history had done. Centrifugal nationalism and conflict between dominions and dependencies was in fact the product of Commonwealth policy. The interwar Commonwealth had 'turned its back on the ideal of a cosmopolis'. Unlike empires of the past, citizenship no longer meant the right to move about freely, but the right to regulate migration.[99] Hancock dismissed the boasts of Imperial Conference delegates regarding 'their service to humanity in bridging the gulf between Europe and Asia, gave substantial attention to the experience of marginalized emigrant Indian communities around the empire, and reflected on Indian nationalists' confrontation with 'obstacles which would have to be surmounted before Indians could look forward with pride to equal co-operation with the Commonwealth of Nations'. With these tensions and inequalities revealed for all to see, Hancock eloquently dismantled the attempts of his historical predecessors to deflect conflict by invoking a 'Third British Empire' or 'Commonwealth'. 'The hair-splitting legalistic commentaries on the title have no importance; but alternative general uses of it sometimes imply opposing political attitudes of very great importance. A sharp distinction between Empire and Commonwealth may symbolize the repudiation of human equality as an ideal. An easy identification of Empire and Commonwealth'—and here he targeted his would-be mentors—'may symbolize the complacency which refuses to recognize the gap between ideal and fact'.[100]

On the cusp of war, imperial history found itself reluctantly back at square one. Hancock's judgment fell on the side of Seeley and his successors. 'If the writer felt himself compelled to choose between this non-universalizing, national-expansionist interpretation of the existing British Commonwealth, and the sweetness and light of the yearning universalizing interpretations, he would choose the former. His narrative of fact has revealed the irrelevance of vague and gushing universalism'. Against a backdrop of geopolitical uncertainty, Hancock professed to stand down. His volume could not 'pretend to be a finished book about the British Commonwealth. The book will not be finished until Stalin's hypothesis has been tested'. Two outcomes seemed imaginable. The peoples of the British Empire—acknowledging that empire as the moth-eaten, unjust, and incoherent polity that it, in its vastness, really was—might somehow salvage

from diversity the good that it had to offer, in the face of Stalin's totalizing vision. Stalin might be proven wrong.

Then again, Hancock intoned, he might not.[101]

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, then, the reformist visions and historical models of Zimmern, Coupland, and Curtis lay hobbled by interwar critics. Could the Third British Empire have any enduring legacy? The conclusion will reflect on this question, looking ahead to the ways in which the central concerns of race, citizenship, Anglo-American relations, and historical time would inform the public worlds and practices of decolonization. The conflict and bloodshed that often attended those reckonings would have dismayed but not surprised Perham and Hancock. For a generation rising in their stead, however, those very trials would prompt efforts to break a seemingly cursed cycle of thought.

Notes

1. Alfred Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 2nd edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), 1–5.
2. John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 6:1 (1953), 1–15; Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin, *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1974).
3. Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Jim Davidson, *A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian W. K. Hancock* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 63–65.
4. The diffident Hugh Egerton gratefully applauded his successor's 'youth' and 'enthusiasm'. Meanwhile, Sidney Low begrudgingly noted the very same qualities when Coupland beat out Low for the appointment. Low to A. L. Smith, 1 October 1920 and Egerton to Smith, 3 October 1920, A. L. Smith papers, E7, Balliol College Archives, Oxford.
5. Bosco and May, eds., *The Round Table, The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*; John Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Alex May, 'The Round Table, 1910-66', Oxford, D. Phil. thesis, 1995; Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford, 1995), ix–x; Daniel Gorman, 'Lionel Curtis, Imperial Citizenship, and the Quest for Unity', *Historian*, 66:1 (2004), 66–96; Jeanne Morefield, '"An Education to Greece": The Round Table, Imperial Theory and the Uses of History', *History of Political Thought*, 28:2 (2007), 338–61; Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, 'Christianity, Statecraft and Chatham

House: Lionel Curtis and World Order', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 6:2 (1995), 470–489.

6. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 1–5.
7. Reginald Coupland, *The Empire in These Days: An Interpretation* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935), 1.
8. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 1–5.
9. Reginald Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the University of Oxford on 19 November 1921* (Oxford, 1921), 8–10.
10. Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London, 1916), 199–201.
11. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 66–75, 'Great Britain, the Dominions, and the League of Nations' in *The Prospects of Democracy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929), 104–137; [Curtis] 'America and the International Problem', *International Conciliation*, 183 (1923), 23–25.
12. Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth*, 9.
13. But as Curtis admitted later, his aim had been to embody the Round Table in a more permanent institution, and Chatham House fit the bill. 'Front Matter', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, 1:1 (1922), 1–5; Curtis to Robinson, 6 August 1930, Papers of Lionel Curtis and the Round Table, Mss.Eng.hist.c.811 ff. 68–70, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts, Oxford.
14. Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth*, 11–20.
15. R. H. Brand, untitled memorandum, 25 May 1914, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.803.
16. Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth*, 11–20.
17. John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), 358–410.
18. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 80 and *The British Commonwealth in the post-war world* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 30.
19. Curtis to Kerr, 13 November 1916, Round Table papers, Mss.Eng.hist. c.810, ff. 2–6.
20. Curtis to Coupland, 15 October 1917 and Coupland to Curtis, 6 November 1917, Round Table papers, Mss.Eng.hist.c.810, ff. 191–196.
21. Curtis to Coupland, 15 October 1917 and Coupland to Curtis, 6 November 1917.
22. *Wilberforce: A Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923) was the exception. Coupland, *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship* (Oxford,: Oxford University Press, 1925).
23. Coupland, *Kirk on the Zambesi: A Chapter of African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* (London: T. Butterworth, 1933), *East Africa and Its Invaders: From the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1938), and *The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-1890: The Slave Trade and the Scramble* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).

24. Coupland, *Kirk on the Zambesi*, 1–5, 487.
25. Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth*, 11–20.
26. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 86–90.
27. Curtis, 'Memorandum for discussion at Blickling on the 7th October 1932', Round Table papers, Mss.Eng.hist.c.811, ff. 79–88.
28. F. S. Oliver to Leo Amery, 26 March 1906, Amery papers, AMEL 2/5/5/6, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge; Ronald Hyam, 'The Idea of 'Imperial Federation'' in Hyam and Ged Martin, eds., *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 133.
29. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 1–5.
30. Zimmern gave his most famous lecture at Columbia University in January 1925; Curtis and Philip Kerr gave a series of talks each at Williamstown, Massachusetts. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*; Coupland, *The American Revolution and the British Empire: The Sir George Watson Lectures for 1928* (London,: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930); [Kerr], 'A Criterion of Values in International Affairs: An address delivered before the Institute of Politics, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 25 August 1922', *International Conciliation*, 183 (1923), 33–56.
31. 'America and the International Problem', *Round Table* (September 1922).
32. Zimmern, *America & Europe, and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), v, 6
33. Zimmern, *America & Europe*, 76, and *Quo Vadimus?* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 22, 26.
34. Zimmern, *America & Europe*, 25. Disenchanted by British academic work and his ouster from UNESCO, Zimmern permanently left Europe for America in 1948 for a visiting position at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.
35. Coupland, *The American Revolution and the British Empire*.
36. Zimmern, 'The Scholar in Public Affairs' in *America & Europe*, 81–93.
37. Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, 199–210; *Civitas Dei* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1937), 518–520.
38. Zimmern, *Third British Empire*, 86–90.
39. Zimmern, *The British Commonwealth in the Post-War World*, 26–29.
40. Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth*, 11, Zimmern, *America & Europe*, 65, 69.
41. Lionel Curtis, *Papers Relating to the Application of the Principle of Dyarchy to the Government of India, to which are Appended the Report of the Joint Select Committee and the Government of India Act, 1919, with an Introduction by L. Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 475–76; 'Memorandum for discussion at Blickling'.

42. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, 86–90.
43. Curtis to Grigg, 1 October 1913, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.807, ff. 20–24.
44. Coupland to Brand, 20 March 1918 and 14 May 1918, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.803.
45. Curtis to Valentine Chirol, 24 September 1917, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.804, ff. 119–121.
46. S. K. Datta to Curtis, 30 November 1927 and 3 December 1927, S. K. Datta papers, Mss Eur F178/26, Asian and African Studies, The British Library, London.
47. Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1927), 16, 32; Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
48. Sinha, *Specters of Mother India*, 87–89.
49. Sinha, *Specters of Mother India*, 89–90.
50. Reform Club dinner notes, 12 January [1928], MS Simon 61, ff. 94–95.
51. S. K. Datta to Curtis, 30 November 1927 and 3 December 1927, Datta papers, Mss Eur F178/26.
52. Reform club dinner notes, 12 January [1928], Papers of John Allsebrook Simon, MS Simon 61, ff. 94–95, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts, Oxford.
53. 'The Task of the Simon Commission', *The Round Table*, 18:72 (1928), 301–304, 690, 694–696, 704, 713.
54. John W. Cell, *Hailey: A Study In British Imperialism, 1872-1969* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 1999), 262–264.
55. Hailey to Simon, 29 October 1928, MS Simon 63, ff. 2–16.
56. Hailey to Simon, 29 October 1928. Emphasis original.
57. Ashis Nandy provides a foundational outline of homologies of colonial power, i.e. 'masculine:feminine' and 'adult:child' in *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1–63.
58. Hailey to Simon, 29 October 1928, MS Simon 63, ff. 2–16; Cell, *Hailey*; Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 1999), 262–264.
59. Pollard to Simon, 8 March 1930, MS Simon 64, f. 5.
60. Trevelyan to Simon, 13 March 1930, MS Simon 64, ff. 12–13.
61. Lothian to Simon, 24 June 1930, MS Simon 64, ff. 217–218.
62. Lothian to Simon, 24 June 1930. Five months later, Lothian became one of the four Liberal delegates to the first Round Table Conference on India in London.

63. B. R Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj, 1929-1942: The Penultimate Phase* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 16.
64. Simon to Dawson, 30 June 1930, MS Simon 65, ff. 39–42.
65. Memo by Simon, 1 July 1930, MS Simon 65, ff. 43–48.
66. Simon to Coupland, 1 July 1930, MS Simon 65, ff. 49–52.
67. Coupland to Simon, 29 June 1930 and 3 July 1930, Simon to Coupland, 5 July 1930, MS Simon 65, ff. 22, 79, 95–107.
68. John Buchan, 'Simon Report and Conference', *Times*, 4 July 1930.
69. Coupland to Simon, 8 July 1930, ff. 109–110.
70. Coupland to Simon, 8 July 1930.
71. Reginald Coupland, 'Dominion Status', *Times*, 26 November 1931.
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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

If the 'Third British Empire' slowed in the mid-1930s, it was ossifying from the inside by 1940; and it was the brittle shell of an ideal come 1945. But the modes of history writing developed and sustained over generations did not disappear. This conclusion surveys how imperial historians responded to the imperatives of the Second World War, and how constitutionalism remained available, even indispensable, as British thinkers confronted postwar decolonization. It then grapples with the fortunes of imperial historical theory in the mid-twentieth century—with the episodes of protest, disillusionment, and bloodshed that attended the writing of an imperial story at that empire's end, and which have yet to find a chronicler.

'Whitewashing' Imperialism

'I am strongly convinced that you have found the key to the solution of the existing World chaos', wrote a 40-year-old Vincent Harlow to Lionel Curtis in May 1939. The important thing was to preach widely, to get the notion of a 'World State' into the 'sphere of immediate, practical politics.' 'I submit', Harlow concluded, 'the response might be overwhelming; and the World Order, which we so ardently desire, might then come before, instead of after, a World catastrophe'.[1] Oxford's interwar imperial theorists had imparted some of their messianic edge to a rising generation of historians. And yet, despite the hard lessons of the 1930s, those historians had no more accurate grasp on the future than their predecessors.

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The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 presented Harlow and fellow imperial historians with a new mandate. Gone was talk of unitary world government. Instead, Harlow's task as head of the empire division of the reconstituted Ministry of Information was to refocus public attention on the special potential of the British empire, and to paint in an especially rosy hue the 'ladder of self-government' on which 'colonial'—that is, formerly 'dependent'—populations found themselves.[2] This time around, the British Cabinet was not going to allow propaganda to unfold on the same ad hoc basis that had characterized efforts in the First World War. Already in 1938, Cabinet members had begun requisitioning information about the organization and then liquidation of John Buchan's ministry in 1917–1918. With the commencement of hostilities, a subcommittee formed to oversee the production of official war histories. The Cabinet secretly tapped Keith Hancock to head the project. As official historian, Hancock spent his days in London overseeing the histories and his nights on local watch, with frequent travel to university lectures and debates, where he pushed the official line in a private capacity 'as Professor Hancock of Birmingham University'.[3]

Then there was Harlow. Professional persistence and the occasional flash of ideological fervor had gotten him a position of considerable influence at the intersection of imperial history and wartime propaganda. After serving in the First World War, Harlow had taken a second in modern history at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1921 and taught at Southampton before returning to Oxford as Librarian of the newly established Rhodes House collection in 1927. As Beit Professor Reginald Coupland told H. A. L. Fisher, Harlow was 'an industrious scholar of West Indian history: his work on Barbados is thorough but uninspired.... He is definitely not [alpha]. But, if no [alpha]'s are available, might well be considered.'[4] Harlow held on. Not only did he get the Rhodes House job, but in 1930 he beat out Margery Perham for the post of Beit Lecturer, where he stayed until succeeding A. P. Newton as Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College London in 1938.[5] It was his profile as Rhodes Professor that won him the attention of the Cabinet in the Second World War. '[It] is no secret', as Simon Potter has pointed out, that imperial historians served as propagandists in the Second World War. Yet no studies have captured the enduring significance of that moment. Potter himself suggests that imperial historians 'felt the need to contest a version of the imperial past that had been forwarded in the 1920s and 1930s by critics of empire, one that questioned the morality of overseas expansion'.[6] But while Harlow and others certainly fought to create a 'usable past', their battle was not one waged merely against anticolonial critics.

The Second World War marked the turning of mainstream imperial history against more radical theorists such as Curtis. Historical propaganda took a moving 'procession' of nations—the core of the 'Third British Empire'—and froze it as a 'ladder of self-government', something to be celebrated for its structure and stability rather than as the contentious, living wellspring of a new world order. Propaganda, academia, and theory collided in 1943, when Coupland and the Rhodes Trust, in consultation with Harlow and the Ministry of Information, brought the Imperial Institute, Royal Empire Society, and London YMCA delegates together in Oxford for an 'empire education' conference.[7] They pointedly did not invite Curtis who, although resident in Oxford, had sunk into manic despair during the war, effectively turning his back on the Commonwealth which he saw had 'twice failed to prevent two murderous wars in the XX century'.[8] As it happened, Curtis crashed the party, assailing Coupland and the audience with a rant about the complacency and bankruptcy of Commonwealth studies. In an acrimonious follow-up exchange, he 'reminded' Harlow that 'the German outlook which has deluged the world in blood was largely the work of professors like Hegel, Fichte, and Treitschke':

> But what of our own professors? It was largely they in 1918 and 1919 who convinced public opinion that the peace of the world could be kept by disarmament and collective security. It was they who helped to build the road which led to Munich and the Ides of March. … And now the professors are at work again telling you to spread this doctrine amongst the forces that the safety of the Commonwealth and the peace of the world can be kept by leaving a constitution which has twice failed to prevent two murderous wars, untouched for the next 30 years.[9]

Harlow fired back. 'Your sneer that "the professors are at work again" trying to inject an opiate which, if effective, would lead to another world war in 30 years is not only insulting but a travesty of the facts'. Curtis was 'out of touch' to miss the fact that in many quarters of the British public there was 'a thick crust of appalling ignorance, apathy and sometimes downright prejudice against the Empire as a creation of a small group of greedy capitalists who are holding millions of coloured people in thrall for their private gain, and that the only decent thing to do if the Atlantic Charter is to have any meaning is to break it up and give everybody their "freedom"'. Harlow continued: 'I believe with an ardour no less strong than your own that unless that negative and destructive attitude is changed—not into

complacent pride or jingoism but into a sober and dynamic realisation that this complex association of races and peoples can in fact make a tremendous contribution and welfare of mankind as a whole—we shall be found wanting when postwar problems confront us'. The time for airy dreams of 'organic union' had passed; imperial thinkers had to find a new way forward. But what Curtis had 'unwittingly' done, Harlow fumed, 'was to confirm a lurking suspicion in some minds at any rate that [Rhodes Secretary Godfrey] Elton, Coupland and I had been busily whitewashing "imperialism"'.[10]

The director of the empire division of the British Ministry of Information worried, in 1943, about the spreading perception that he and his colleagues were 'whitewashing "imperialism"'. This admission encapsulated Harlow's wartime mentality, and the vistas opened and closed by the conflict to imperial historians more generally. While adamant that he was not peddling some Pollyannaish version of the past, Harlow nonetheless contended that it was absolutely essential to take stock, to slow down and even immobilize imperial history in its existing constitutional frame. In the 1920s and 1930s, Curtis had been the most radical of a trio of scholars seeking to create a peaceful world order anchored by the British Commonwealth and built on values of loyal citizenship and ascending sovereignty. The 'Third British Empire' of the interwar years could fly the standard of self-government and democratic aspiration while still relegating subject peoples to a different civilizational space. Come 1943, however, the younger Harlow enjoyed less room to maneuver than had the interwar theorists. The world's populations had indeed been thrown together in an uncomfortable moment of reckoning, and one far more acute than that analyzed by Curtis, Zimmern, and Coupland twenty years earlier. To fight the Second World War, imperial history had to put the brakes on a truly bewildering present. Demands for self-government across the empire were swamping settler-constitutional structures. What else to do but stop, bring the two forces into the same frame, and hope for the best?[11] There were alternatives, although they would not emerge from Britain itself.

India, Anti-history, and the 'Whitewashing' of Decolonization

A powerful response to the late-imperial British progress narrative, and to the model of difference embedded therein, came from two enduring counter-narratives forged in late-imperial India. While this book has analyzed the politics of empire and historical thought from a largely

metropolitan perspective, the conclusion provides an opportunity to reflect on the implications of such an account for that empire's wider and enduring mental worlds. As we have seen, the case of India factored into the development of professional and political imperial history in Britain, first through segregation and contrast, and then through absence. But in hindsight, India's own historical battleground, set even at the most elite level, offered far more sobering perspectives on the wider dynamics and legacies of an imperial story based on human differentiation and constitutionalism than any tale spun from Oxford, Cambridge, or London. We see as much reflected in the approaches of the two most prominent leaders of the Indian independence movement, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi. Neither Gandhi nor Nehru professed to be a historian, and the two leaders had starkly different concepts of how Indians should develop a historical mindset in overcoming colonial rule. Gandhi, as we shall see, could even be considered profoundly anti-historical.[12] Nonetheless, both Gandhi and Nehru negotiated 'a sense of history' to ground demands for independence and for political, social, and economic reform within India.[13] As these political thinkers wrote about the Indian past, they explained historical change in India—particularly the establishment of the Raj—in a way that would enable specific visions for imminent independence. Nehru embraced constitutionalism as India's national birthright, but denied narrative differentiation based on racial or civilizational lines. Gandhi, meanwhile, dismissed wholesale the experience of British conquest and rule, and rejected constitutionalism as a trellis for Indian independence.

While Nehru was hailed as Gandhi's 'heir' in 1948, the sharp divergences between Gandhi and Nehru's political thought have not been lost on subsequent scholars. Nehru—a self-avowed nationalist—has been characterized alternately as a cosmopolitan secularist, formed by his education at Harrow and Cambridge, and as a socialist, impressed early on by Marxism and the modernization of the Soviet Union in the 1920s.[14] Gandhi also fused subcontinental thought with Western education, and derived much philosophical inspiration from movements he encountered during decades abroad in England and Southern Africa. He was, however, a more befuddling and innovative political thinker than Nehru, combining utopianism, economic localism, Hindu spiritualism, and Christian moralism, among other influences. But Gandhi himself scorned 'isms', contending until the end that his behavior and convictions must speak for themselves. He thus based his political programs on concepts of physical and spiritual self-mastery, non-violence, social inclusivity, and mass

mobilization.[15] Over the 1930s and 1940s, Gandhi and Nehru nurtured competing prescriptions for political reform in an independent India. They differed in their very notions of Indian social order and the bonds between the state, the community, and the individual. Gandhi maintained that full *swaraj*, or self-rule, demanded a complete and drastic overhaul of political society, where individual conscience would mediate the needs of all. His ideal political future was 'a state of enlightened anarchy', where 'national life [became] so perfect as to become self-regulated'.[16] At the same time, Gandhi acknowledged such an end might not ever be achieved; the pursuit was essential. Nehru, on the other hand, advocated a strong, centralized government to provide for the material needs of the nation and community, so that individuals might work at personal enlightenment. Institutions had to be in place before lower-level flourishing could occur.

For Gandhi and Nehru, conceptions of political life and the future of the independence movement reflected two distinct visions of historical unfolding. To Nehru, history proved that powerful, enlightened states could best provide for social harmony within the country as well as protection from external threats.[17] Gandhi, on the other hand, held that his program would be a revolutionary 'experiment': history, as it was commonly understood, held no precedent for this scale of transformation. Indians had to look beyond chronicles of kings, wars, and empire to find evidence of the 'soul-force' necessary to forge a truly independent India.[18] Nehru devoted much of his time to writing historical narratives supporting India's bid for independence and global prominence along the lines that colonial rule had marked a momentous shift for Indian society, and had brought certain benefits such as education, technology, and incorporation into the global economic system. While Nehru flatly rejected staple pro-Raj interpretations—such as the contention that the British takeover had 'saved' India from unending warfare and oriental despotism, or that India's sentimental unity had only been achieved through colonial guidance—he nonetheless veered between a sweeping Marxist approach which narrated Indian history within the context of continuous, global social change, and the event- and personality-based historiography to which he had been exposed during his English education.[19] On the whole, his historical writing left intact the constitutional corollary to this material unfolding.

Gandhi's engagement with the past, on the other hand, was explicitly anti-constitutional, and for that matter, anti-historical. Gandhi openly rejected British and Western approaches to history as an epistemological pursuit, arguing instead for the primacy of experience and conscience in the

face of immediate injustice for motivating the Indian independence struggle.[20] While Nehru believed that 'the lesson of history' was 'man's growth from barbarism to civilization',[21] Gandhi contended that insofar as 'history' was the record of 'how kings played, how they became enemies of one another, and how they murdered one another', it could offer no lessons.[22] This was in part a tactic directed against British history making and its insistence on progress, civilizational hierarchy, and development, all of which prefigured the terms of self-government. Gandhi opted to construct an alternate political framework through the manipulation of linguistic tenses.[23] A survey of Gandhi's most oft-cited missives reveals that he was remarkably consistent in denying past events a rhetorical space of their own, to the point of rarely using the past tense of verbs in his English writings.[24] A few typical examples are as follows: 'India… *is* the nursery of one of the great faiths of the world'; 'I hold British rule in India *to be* a curse…. It *has* impoverished the dumb millions….'; 'There *is*… no inherent incapacity for self-government in any country or nation'; and 'India *cannot* cease to be one nation because people of different religions live in it'.[25] By using a language of continuity rather than ongoing change or disjunction, Gandhi sought not merely to referee past events, but to maintain the moral demands of the present over self-referential and hierarchical metropolitan narratives of the past.[26] To this end, Gandhi held up British invocations of a special representative creed as empty and deadening. Britain's Parliament, he stated as early as 1909's *Hind Swaraj*, was a 'sterile woman and a prostitute'.[27] In his bid for a *swaraj* that did not aspire to merely formal or electoral expression, Gandhi sought to loosen the liberal teleological chokehold on India's bid for independence, to fatally compromise the entrenched global structures of Anglo-Saxon settler-imperial historical thought, and to confront the potential violence of a non- or extra-constitutional world on its way to a more authentic freedom. Gandhi's rejection of historical narrative—whether social evolutionary, economic, political, or constitutional—marked out a radically alternative framework not only for interpreting the history of the British Empire, but for engaging the violence of that empire's end. While he preached non-violence, Gandhi's philosophy encompassed and engaged violence and death as constant possibilities in political life. Moreover, Gandhi's political language was grounded in terms of death as an experience common to all humans, and he related political action to degrees of mortality and transcendence throughout his writings.[28] Only by

abandoning a fear of death—by letting go of an ingrained obsession with beginnings, processes, and ends—could a nation achieve true self-rule.[29]

In this light, the Gandhian politics of history and of death provide a fresh and chilling perspective on the devastating relationship between an imperial constitutional narrative 100 years in the making, and one of the swiftest, ghastliest humanitarian crises of the twentieth century. The political event of decolonization in British India occurred on 15 August 1947, sped along by Britain's material and moral shortages and the willfulness of a new viceroy determined to wind up the Raj with the greatest possible measure of speed, goodwill, and dignity. But the 'transfer of power', when it came, brought consequences which were tangled for Britain and catastrophic for the new nations of India and Pakistan. In Punjab, the boundary award demarcating the South Asian states ignited regional tensions between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. Violence which had flared intermittently from March 1947 ballooned into widespread slaughter at the moment of the August partition. In the eight weeks following independence, inter-community massacres and migrations displaced ten million persons. Hindus and Sikhs fled east to India, and Muslims west to Pakistan. An estimated 500,000 Punjabis died by disease, exposure, and famine, as well as the horrific rioting, arson, and organized extermination campaigns which characterized the upheaval.[30]

Gandhi, with his long-standing emphasis on mortality, responded to the trauma of mass death in 1947 through globally visible acts of fasting and, as scholars have suggested, the physical exposure which left him vulnerable to assassination on 30 January 1948.[31] In contrast, British journalists, politicians, and scholars responded to independence and partition by celebrating the ideal of a constitutional transfer and then dismissing ethnic and religious violence as rude manifestations of a savage human past. While much research remains to be done toward understanding the ideologies and processes of decolonization throughout the British world, this conclusion suggests two ways of looking at the connection between imperial historical politics and the bloodshed that attended one definitive event: the end of the British empire in India. The more speculative view is causal. At some point in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, British World constitutionalism became irrevocably tied up with the political battles which defined the Raj in relation to other components of the British Empire, as well as the nature of British rule in India itself. In India, late Victorian administrative efforts to fix religion as a form of ethnic identity—governable and 'unconnected with the assertions of any principles of belief or political action'—

remained profoundly implicated in the project of discovering the political essence of Indian society. When fired in an imperial forge blazing with debates over belonging, rights, and resource access, identities became newly political. Such was to be the inheritance of Pakistan, Thomas Metcalf contends.[32] In seeking the turning point toward communal antagonism and eventual partition, some historians have looked to the First World War, during which the British government responded to Indian nationalism for the first time in immediate constitutional terms, with Secretary of State Edwin Montagu declaring that 'the progressive realization of responsible government' was the goal of British rule. Others have looked to the repeated delay and disappointment of thoroughgoing reform, especially in 1928 and 1935, as fueling competition among political blocs on the subcontinent which then exploded after 1945 in the space opened by wartime turmoil and Britain's postwar exhaustion.[33] Such debates remain at the heart of modern South Asian history, and suggest broad questions of political contingency that should extend to the later cascading 'transfers of power', with their own patterns of violence and rupture, in the 1950s and 1960s.

The other connection between the imperial historical mindset and the human toll of Indian partition lies in the problem of representation. The exclusionary, constitutional progress narrative, as it dominated the writing and fighting of imperial history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ultimately preempted a morally substantive recognition of the messiness and murderousness of mid-century 'transfers of power'. There was nothing measured or gradual in Clement Attlee's abrupt announcement on 20 February 1947 that Britain would withdraw from India within a year and a half, or in Lord Mountbatten's acceleration of that timeframe to 15 August 1947. And yet, almost immediately and for years to come, British politicians and writers were able to harness a moderate, constitutional narrative to the imperatives of transition: 'the liberal vision of India's transformation that had shaped Montagu's 1917 declaration was read back into the earlier history of the Raj'. By marginalizing diehards such as Winston Churchill, the British political establishment could celebrate the supposed 'triumph of the spirit that had continuously informed Britain's purpose in India for over 100 years. Macaulay and Mountbatten, the last viceroy, were thus indissolubly linked as the beginning and the end of a chain forged of liberal idealism'.[34] In the longer term, this vision of history gained authority in the first round of postcolonial histories of British India, and the Raj nostalgia which swept Britain and America during the 1980s.[35] But while the refrain of 'mission accomplished' infused outlets from

newspapers and Parliamentary debates to scholarly journals, the facts and experiences underlying the reportage were less rousing. The *Round Table* expressed primary relief that power had been handed over by constitutional process and that, supposedly, 'the rule of law [had] not been defied'. Clement Attlee sighed even more circumspectly in private. 'I doubt if things will go awfully easily now as the Indian leaders know little of administration', Attlee wrote to his brother days after independence, 'but at least we have come out with honour instead, as at one time seemed likely, being pushed out ignominiously with the whole country in a state of confusion'.[36]

Talk of honor, rule of law, and constitutionalism studiously ignored body counts. For this and other reasons, Indo-Pakistani partition violence remained a trauma bereft of imperial or international narrative for decades after the event. While scholars working in the 1990s and 2000s produced a vast literature on the massacres and migrations in South Asian political memory, the British side still requires further attention.[37] Much of the amnesia, and indeed the nostalgia, which came after 1947 was made possible by a heavy dose of transitional anesthetic: a consensus that discovered, as if with fresh eyes, the coherence and benevolence of direct rule; that blamed circumstance and 'Asiatic' inferiority for the friction of decolonization; and that placed the improvised practices of an improvised Commonwealth in front of difficult and downright lethal realities. British observers, from the press to Parliament, dismissed partition violence as the unfortunate manifestation of primordial 'savagery'. Their recurrent language identified misery, rape, and slaughter as 'a hangover from the past'. In reality, those horrors marked a new and violent political order.[38] But the fact remained: many British observers remained fully capable, in good faith, of consigning the trauma of partition to another time and historical space. Historical thought, as it had informed the politics of empire in Britain from the nineteenth century onward, made it possible in 1947 to dispel such a bloody hell from the logbook of imperial and international politics. Given the ensuing three-quarters of a century of enmity between India and Pakistan, and ongoing crises of South and Central Asian state sovereignty rooted in mangled imperial pasts, that erasure continues to prove costly.

The Postcolonial Trauma of Imperial History

Much discussion could follow as to the extent to which these core issues emerging from Indian independence reappeared or were refracted in waves of decolonization that swept the British world in subsequent decades. More

work might be done also on the relationship between the British historical outlook and American attitudes toward colonial independence and the Cold War.[39] Last but not least, there remains to be investigated a variety of fascinating efforts toward articulating a 'third way' in history, one that navigated the space between the constitutionalism of wartime imperialists drawing on deep institutional heritage, and the radical historical inversion exemplified by Gandhi. Historians have recently pinpointed such projects in postcolonial activisms well beyond the former British Empire.[40] Within that empire, perhaps one strain can be seen, somewhat paradoxically, in the alternate histories written by the last generation of Indian Civil Service to counter the Mountbatten narrative and its adjuncts. When former governor of the Northwest Frontier Province Olaf Caroe, for example, confronted triumphalist histories of decolonization, he responded with a plea for a newly sober appraisal of the past. 'I often think', he wrote in a review of H. V. Hodson's *Great Divide*, that a greater sense of humour, a lesser intensity, a deeper knowledge of what was the meaning of the Indo-British synthesis might have prevailed…. we might have reversed the trend to partition and avoided the mass murder and migration that darkened the end of British rule. There was need of a lighter touch, a balanced judgment, an instinct for what India might have been. Is the patrician, turned radical, well chosen to guide great events in the affairs of nations?'[41] The 'meaning of the Indo-British synthesis'; 'an instinct for what India might have been': Caro invoked terms redolent of Maine and Lyall, and their late-Victorian attempts to find a middle ground between a heady universalism and the baldly exclusionary tactics of Seeley. While far from anticolonial in spirit, appraisals like Caroe's nonetheless echoed earlier polemics and meditations on the nature and object of intra-imperial connection.

Other 'third ways' emerged from even more surprising quarters. Indeed, Oxford-based imperial historians began to seek new directions. Four years after succeeding Reginald Coupland in the Beit Chair in 1948, Vincent Harlow published the first volume of his most famous work, *The Founding of the Second British Empire*. Unease with his wartime role, and fresh skepticism for the field in which he had been trained, pervaded Harlow's account. His critique began by zeroing in on historical ritual. 'It is customary', he began, 'to divide the history of the British Empire into two parts' falling before and after 1783. Further, 'It is customary to define the problem of Britain's relations with her Colonies in political terms, as a matter of devising constitutional machinery to satisfy the aspirations of colonial nationalism'. Neither of these devices, Harlow believed, satisfied

an imperial history suited to the experience of the Second World War. What forces could explain the 'unexpected accretions' of British power in Asia and the rise of new colonization ventures in Canada and Australasia; or, more maddeningly, the fact that those seemingly divergent processes unfolded almost simultaneously? Indeed, as Harlow saw it, the ultimate stakes of writing imperial history were invested in the 'outcome in our time… an evolving Commonwealth of European, Asian and African peoples: an experiment in voluntary association which, by reasons of the magnitude of its potentialities, demands that the self-interest of each shall be expressed in action of a formidably high order of enlightenment'. To make sense of this daunting prospect, Harlow, in his famous interpretation, sought to impress upon his readers that the so-called 'Second British Empire began some thirty years before the collapse of the First', and that political continuity reigned despite the shock of the American Revolution. Constitutional obsessions had distracted previous scholars from the fact that the 'fundamental issues' of British settler colonialism were social. Where there was rupture, as in America, it was because 'social divergence gave rise to political difference'.[42] The different components of the 'second' empire arose in the same chronological and political-economic frame, one which created a coherent, liberal ecosystem to nurture the kernel of future commonwealth.

Harlow would be taken to task for several extravagances by another Oxford historian, Richard Pares, before he was able to get the second volume of *The Founding* to press. Pares criticized Harlow's inability to explain the seeming clear British appetite for territory in India, his overemphasis on economic rather than military and strategic aims, and his supposed overstatement of Britain's turn away from colonization toward trade in the eighteenth century.[43] While these complaints may seem academic in the context of an otherwise affirming review, they indicated at the time just how far Harlow had stuck his neck out. The former director of the empire division of the Ministry of Information had shown his cards. The postwar world demanded an unsettling and even radical reinterpretation of Britain's empire. But two factors stopped this intended thrust. For one, Harlow imitated, if all too hollowly, the original sin of the founders of imperial history in failing to earnestly incorporate India—'the overlooked elephant of Dr. Harlow's first volume', according to Pares[44]—in his notion of an eighteenth-century pivot. For another, Harlow was disinclined to controversy and did not live long enough to follow through on his intentions for *The Founding*.[45]

It remained for the next generation, twenty years younger than Harlow and Pares, to give full voice the imperial trauma of postcoloniality. 'My group of war-bred historians, whose primal experience was the sudden companionships of war followed by colonial withdrawal, were thrown into an examination of the nature of British colonialism'. So Eric Stokes explained the pragmatic, wry, even terse accounting that his peers gave the bewildering vista of an imperial century at its pivot. '[It] can plausibly be urged', he continued, 'that the first post-war studies [of the Commonwealth] were singularly unsuccessful in breaking out of the constraining circle of domestic experience; that we grappled intellectually with the world beyond Europe in terms of our own common-sense experience, directing our attention to that which was modern, Anglophone, utilitarian and comprehensible within the terms of Western analogues'.[46] Stokes, a Cambridge-trained historian of India and empire, was reflecting from the 1970s on the promises and limitations that had marked the field-defining work of his generation. In no small way, he provided a window onto the worldviews of Ronald Robinson and Jack Gallagher, the Cambridge-trained historians who supposedly began a crucial 'break with a patriotic British history', challenged 'the Whig Anglican pieties' of Egerton, Coupland, and Harlow—unsteady as they were—and became the progenitors of British- and American-based area studies.[47]

Indeed, what to do with the 34-year-old Oxford lecturer who served as junior commentator in December 1954 for the British Broadcasting Corporation's series on the end of empire? Prudence Smith, BBC producer, gathered the most prominent historical talent available for the program, including Harlow, Nicholas Mansergh, and the formidable Margery Perham. But the show was delayed. 'Ronald Robinson is holding up the works I'm afraid', Smith wrote to an unamused Perham.[48] If Perham had acted as the youthful voice of conscience against Curtis, Kerr, and the Round Table in the 1930s, she and Harlow found themselves upstaged in 1954 by one of the authors of 'Imperialism of Free Trade', the controversial *Economic History Review* article that had appeared one year earlier.[49] While Perham spoke at length about Britain's colonial purpose 'to develop self-government in the Colonies, and to do so in such a way that their peoples remain voluntarily in the Commonwealth', Robinson hit the airwaves with a far more apocalyptic message. 'Does the Commonwealth in fact mean very much as a political unity?' he asked. 'Or is it simply a highly successful myth put about by romantic historians to replace the glories of empire?' Robinson's own answer came closer to the latter. Having worked

as a research officer in the African studies branch of the Colonial Office while completing his Ph.D., Robinson spoke of the divide between the 'white, Indian and African nationalist' in East and Central Africa. In 'these struggles between men of different colour and culture to decide how they should live together', he warned, 'the racial and the multi-racial concepts and loyalties of the whole Commonwealth are at war'. Indeed, '[this] is the special feature of a multi-racial society', Robinson continued: 'it is not a society at all. History may have brought Indians, Africans and Europeans together in one country; but they are divided by civilizations which are centuries and continents apart; and re-divided within themselves by languages, tribes, and religions'.[50] The challenge for the rising generation of historians was to make sense of the nonsensical; to find a way out, if one existed, by explaining the original stumble in.

How was it that Britain had arrived at this point by 1954: the faintly beating heart of a 'commonwealth' that, rather than paving the way for a new world order, had but managed to check the careers of its own virulently racist progeny, the Union of South Africa and the Central African Federation?[51] Such tragicomic sensibilities would appear in the works Robinson penned with Gallagher, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' and later *Africa and the Victorians* (1963).[52] 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' began with a bombshell cloaked as observation: 'It ought to be a commonplace that Great Britain during the nineteenth century expanded overseas by means of "informal empire" as much as by acquiring dominion in the strict constitutional sense'. It then unfolded into a subtle rumination on the mid-century condition: recent withdrawal from India, tangled responsibilities in Africa, and subordination to America. Imperial historians, Robinson and Gallagher suggested, had become prisoners of their own assumptions about the nature of empire. While Harlow had attempted a break with constitutionalist interpretations of the American Revolution, and with segregationist and processionalist theories of the imperial past more generally, Robinson and Gallagher turned their sights on the nineteenth century. No one was spared, from 'orthodox' historians swept up in enthusiasms for white federation to baying critics of the 'new imperialism'. Victorian expansion, Robinson and Gallagher insisted, had been continuous, a series of shifts up and down between 'direct or indirect methods of maintaining British interests' based on the demands of a burgeoning society. The absurdity of the troubled situation in colonial Africa during the 1950s, then, was that the 'main work of imperialism in the so-called

expansionist era [had been] in the more intensive development of areas already lined with the world economy, rather than in the extensive annexations of the remaining marginal regions of Africa. The best finds and prizes had already been made; in tropical Africa the imperialists were merely scraping the bottom of the barrel'.[53] And there, according to Robinson and Gallagher, lay the cruel reality of Britain's Africa dilemma in the 1950s. Tropical rule had come about as a result of neither providential mandate nor rapacious greed, but was rather the culmination of a long human comedy. In the hands of two generations of inadequately self-critical historians, however, that comedy had unraveled into tragedy and farce.

Bloodlines

'The imperial historian, in fact, is very much at the mercy of his own version of empire'.[54] Robinson and Gallagher's gentle taunt follows us onward. For the past three decades, much scholarship on the British Empire, and on European empire in general, has emphasized coherence. Empire was 'synoptic', the set of relations brought about by external entities' hunger for gain, and therefore, control and amalgamation. Imperialism, meanwhile, was self-justifying, even self-deceiving, but always aggrandizing.[55] This book has presented another way of understanding the dynamics of empire, in which those dynamics were fueled by insecurity, and another way of organizing imperialism, in which imperialists were bent on putting up partitions against diversity, contingency, and global exposure. There remains much room for productive debates as to how those mental worlds and strategic realities coexisted or conflicted with what recent generations of scholars have tended to see as the late British Empire's vast and fatally inclusive embrace. This book has analyzed key moments of negotiation and tension between the inclusive and universal on one hand, and the exclusive and chauvinist on the other, as they played out in Britain and wider imperial networks in the long lifetime that began with the mid-Victorians and ended in global total war.

Taken as a whole, this book also has called for a recognition of the crucial, inextinguishable role of historical practice in the making of British worlds past, present, and future. The case of imperial history calls for a stance of humility, and not just by professional historians. As Richard Drayton has reminded us, 'History is often most political where it pretends not to be, for in those moments, it ignores how a particular context of

power has constructed its choices of field, of problem, of periodization, of agency, and indeed how it comes to offer ideological reinforcement to that way of organizing the world'.[56] This wise observation pertains to scholars and publics alike, and to the professional political actors who would seek to sway, dismiss, or defund the ranging capabilities of either. History shows no sign of ending anytime soon; the question is whether we will be writing, teaching, and learning it with agility and profound generosity.

Meanwhile, a few words remain as to a specific problem this book has confronted: how to step beyond either diplomatic histories or postcolonial critiques in telling the story of the decolonization and international politics in the twentieth century. Indeed, the vast gap between twentieth-century anticolonial ideals and the subsequent traumas of decolonization and nation-building in the former British Empire has animated decades of controversy. A broad postcolonial school of historians and cultural theorists has criticized independence-era government malfeasance, economic corruption, and international contests for political legitimacy as stains of colonialism.[57] Various American and British historians, for their part, have lamented the 'political void' left by British rule.[58] One word comes to mind insofar as it illuminates the relationship between the Anglo-American pursuit of historical knowledge and the ends and endings of empire: bloodlines. For history was indeed most political where it pretended not to be, and lethally so. An intellectual genealogy, routed via the discipline of imperial history, explains how the conventions and assumptions of late-Victorian constitutionalism—avowedly segregationist in its time—came to be applied, haphazardly and far too late, to anticolonial challenges to British rule in Asia and Africa in the twentieth century. The rhetorical and strategic efforts of imperial policymakers to direct the process and legal fact of colonial self-government or independence after the Second World War carried a death toll. They were at least in part a spur to internecine political antagonism, the pitched stratification of social, ethnic, and religious identities, and ultimately, the deaths of hundreds of thousands in the conflicts that attended decolonization, from India to Palestine to Kenya and beyond.[59]

This conceptual descent had a flesh-and-blood incarnation—a father-and-son tale of well-meaning men who epitomized the truest service of their times and who, although now largely forgotten, represented the conflicting currents of Britain's imperial story. William Stubbs, introduced at the outset of this book as the prime mover of historical constitutionalism, served as a pathbreaker and ongoing point of reference for modern history, and then the history of the British empire, as politically and morally

relevant subjects of study in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Stubbs's significance was not merely doctrinal; his flesh and blood ruled the late colonial world. In the 1920s and 1930s, Stubbs's eldest son, Reginald Edward, became one of the most ubiquitous and reputedly obstinate governors in the late British empire, obstructing movement toward self-government from Jamaica to Cyprus and Ceylon.[60] Edward Stubbs famously inherited his father's directness, if not historical pursuits. He held the reins of legal change in the 'dependent' or colonial world during a period of transition. And his 'directness', as it insisted on establishing order, so-called, and molding colonial populations in the example of supposedly undifferentiated Britannic citizenship, marked Edward Stubbs as the heir, by disposition and genes, to a late-Victorian and Edwardian constitutionalism lumbering in practice between ideals of progress, hedging on the 'universal', and remaining ever vigilant to the supposed necessities of reaction.

William and Edward Stubbs, father and son, represent the far endpoints of this book's chronology, as well as professional and geographical opposites. The father was a mid-Victorian churchman, scholar, and university don who came to personify major metropolitan currents of thought and died the same year as Queen Victoria. The son was a roving functionary of the late British Empire, an influential man-on-the-spot largely divorced from domestic and academic concerns who died in 1947, just after the century's first major act of imperial dismantling. The Stubbses could be seen as marking out the extremes between which most of the characters in this study have operated. In the end, they are emblematic of lifetimes and bloodlines that cut boundlessly between historical worldview and political action.

Notes

1. Vincent Harlow to Lionel Curtis, Lionel Curtis papers, MS Curtis 16, ff. 93–95, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts, Oxford, UK.
2. V. T. Harlow, 'The ladder of self-government', draft copy in 'Publicity about the colonies: material for British Army (1943)', Colonial Office records, CO/875/14/19, National Archives, Kew, UK.
3. CAB 103/308; W. K. Hancock to Nicholas Mansergh, 29 October 1942, CAB 160/3, National Archives.
4. V. T. Harlow to H. A. L. Fisher, 11 August 1927; Lionel Curtis to H. A. L. Fisher, 6 September 1927, Fisher papers, MS Fisher 81, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts.

5. 'Beit Lectureship: Volume containing minutes of various meetings chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, including meetings of the Board of Electors to the Beit Professorship of Colonial History, 1905–1920', DC 9/1/1, Oxford University Archives.
6. Simon J. Potter, ''What did you do in the war, Professor?': Imperial History and Propaganda, 1939–1945' in Robert J. Blyth and Keith Jeffery, eds., *The British Empire and its Contested Pasts* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 24.
7. 'Empire Education, 1942–1955', Rhodes Trust papers, RT/3012 (1–3), Rhodes House, Oxford, UK.
8. Lionel Curtis to V. T. Harlow, 28 September 1943, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.811, Bodleian Modern Manuscripts.
9. Curtis to Harlow, 28 September 1943.
10. V. T. Harlow to Lionel Curtis, 30 September 1943, Round Table papers, MS Eng.hist.c.811.
11. The fourth section of this conclusion will discuss Harlow's later response to that professional and moral dilemma.
12. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 55–63; Vinay Lal, *The history of history: politics and scholarship in modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61–65.
13. Lal, *The History of History*, 67.
14. B. R. Nanda, 'Nehru and the British', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30:2 (May 1996), 469–479, Balkrishna Govind Gokhale, 'Nehru and History', *History and Theory*, 17:3 (Oct 1978) 311.
15. 'My life is my message'. M. K. Gandhi (1947) in *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. III, ed. Raghavan Iyer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 609.
16. M. K. Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Dennis Dalton (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1996), 91.
17. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 6th edn. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 22–30, 276–281.
18. Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony J. Parel (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 88–99. Gandhi's emphasis on 'experiment' is also evident in the title and content of his lengthy autobiography. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
19. English Marxism, he related, 'produced a powerful effect on my mind and helped me to see history and current affairs in a new light. The long chain of history and of social development appeared to have some meaning, some sequence, and the future lost some of its obscurity'. Nehru, *Discovery of*

India, 29; Gokhale, 'Nehru and History', 315–317; Lal, *The History of History*, 82–83.

20. Lal, *The History of History*, 64–65; Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 55–63.
21. Although Nehru admitted this progress seemed deadly slow from his vantage point in Naini Central Prison. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History; being further letters to his daughter, written in prison, and containing a rambling account of history for young people* (New York: John Day, [1942]), 6.
22. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 89; Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 55–59; Lal, 63–64.
23. Lal, *The History of History*, 61.
24. One exception would be Gandhi's *Autobiography* (1925). On Gandhi's use of urgency in writing, see also Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 327.
25. Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*, 39, 75, 31, 110. Emphasis added.
26. Lal, *History of History*, 64–65, Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 61.
27. M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and other writings*, ed., Anthony Parel (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 78.
28. Ashis Nandy, 'Final Encounter: The Politics of the Assassination of Gandhi' in *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 70–98; Joseph S. Alter, *Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet and the Politics of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).
29. 'The eternal processes of creation and destruction are going on ceaselessly'. [M. K. Gandhi] 'The Fear of Death', *Young India*, 13 Oct. 1921, in *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. Raghavan Iyer, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 236–237.
30. Paul Brass , 'The partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–1947: Means, Methods, and Purposes', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5:1 (2003), 71–101; David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan and South Asian history: in search of a narrative', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57:4 (November 1998), 1068–1095; Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
31. Nandy, 'Final Encounter'; David Arnold, *Gandhi* (London: Longman Pearson, 2001), 225.
32. Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 224. Karuna Mantena offers related reflections on the evacuation of the political in, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
33. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy*, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 104, 150; Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 226.

34. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 233. See also Nicholas Owen, ''More Than a Transfer of Power': Independence Day Ceremonies in India, 15 August 1947', *Contemporary Record*, 6:3 (1992), 415–451.
35. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj,* 233; Elizabeth Buettner, *Imperial Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 268; Antoinette Burton, 'India, Inc? Nostalgia, memory and the empire of things', in Stuart Ward (ed.) *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 217–232; H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan* (London: Hutchison, 1969).
36. H. V. Hodson [unsigned], 'Valediction to India', *Round Table*, 137:148 (September 1947), 336–337; Clement Attlee to Tom Attlee, 18 August 1947, Mss. Eng.c.4793, Attlee Papers, Bodleian Library.
37. Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan and South Asian history'; Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
38. See esp. *The New Statesman*, 13 September 1947. More recent scholarship frames sexual violence not as primitive reversion, but as loaded with political urgency. 'In the context of Partition it engraved the division of India into India and Pakistan on women of both religious communities in a way that they *became* the respective countries…. a *whole new order* of violence came into play, by men against their own kinswomen; and by women against their daughters or sisters and their own selves. Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, 41–44. Emphasis added.
39. For a suggestive perspective on the Anglo-American imperial transition and formative analyses, see Wm. Roger Louis, 'Sir Keith Hancock and the British Empire: The Pax Britannica and the Pax Americana', *Historical Journal*, 120:488 (September 2005), 937–962.
40. Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
41. 'The end of British India (review of HVH's Great Divide', [1970], Olaf Caroe papers, MSS Eur/F203/1, Asian and African Studies, British Library, London, UK.
42. Vincent T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763–1793*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952), 1–11.

43. Harlow died in 1961; the second volume of his *Founding* appeared posthumously. Richard Pares, review of 'The Founding of the Second British Empire', *English Historical Review*, 68 (1953), 282–285; Ronald Hyam, 'British Imperial Expansion in the Late-Eighteenth century', *Historical Journal* (1967), 113–124.
44. Pares, review of 'The Founding of the Second British Empire', 284.
45. Hyam, 'British imperial expansion in the late-eighteenth century', 113–114.
46. Eric Stokes, ''The voice of the hooligan': Kipling and the Commonwealth experience', Smuts lecture, University of Oxford [1971], Percival Spear papers, box 1, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge, UK.
47. Richard Drayton, 'Imperial History and the Human Future', *History Workshop Journal*, 74:1 (Autumn 2012), 156–172; D. K. Fieldhouse, 'Can Humpty-Dumpty Be Put Together Again? Imperial History in the 1980s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12:2 (January 1984), 9–23.
48. Prudence Smith to Margery Perham, 3 December 1954, Margery Perham papers, MS Perham 247/3, Rhodes House, Oxford.
49. John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 4 (1953), 1–15.
50. Typescripts of recorded broadcasts for the British Broadcasting Corporation's 'Nationalism and the British Commonwealth', by Margery Perham and Ronald Robinson, 22 December and 9 December 1954, MS Perham 247/3.
51. Typescript of recorded broadcast by Robinson, 9 December 1954, MS Perham 247/3.
52. Gallagher, according to reminiscences, kept a leveler head. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1961); John Darwin, 'John Andrew Gallagher, 1919–1980', *Proceedings of the British Academy: Volume 150: Biographical Memoirs of Fellows, VI* (London: British Academy, 2008).
53. Gallagher and Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', 1–15.
54. Gallagher and Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', 1.
55. In his 2009 inaugural lecture as Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College London, Richard Drayton defined empire as fundamentally about the 'processes of violence and domination which integrated human society, and the ideas of enlarged community which formed with and against it'. Imperialism, meanwhile, is 'a regime through which external entities derive maximum gain from the labour and resources within a territory'. Drayton, 'Imperial History and the Human Future', 156–172.
56. Drayton, 'Imperial History and the Human Future'.

57. Robert Young's genealogy of the various branches of postcolonial theory provides a sound review of these issues and the ranging intellectual and political responses they engendered. Young, *Postcolonialism*.
58. Max Beloff as quoted in Wm. Roger Louis, 'American Anti-Colonialism and the Dissolution of the British Empire', *International Affairs* 61:3 (Summer 1985), 395. Comparable notes are rung in Niall Ferguson's *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2002) and Bernard Porter's *Empire and Superempire: Britain, America and the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). Broadly speaking, those claiming to work from a 'traditional' political and diplomatic historical perspective have advocated an increase in mechanisms for international governance, involving a number of stable countries spearheaded by the United States. Postcolonial theorists, on the other hand, demand the very dismantling of normative concepts such as 'development' and 'collective security' which valorize European and American political examples and defense priorities. A remarkable early attempt at bridging 'diplomatic' and 'postcolonial' frameworks may be found in Odd Arne Westad's, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
59. For a sobering survey of these events and processes, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); and Westad, *The Global Cold War*.
60. H. C. Luke, 'Stubbs, Sir Reginald Edward', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (1959). Accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/olddnb/36361, 30 January 2012. For Edward Stubbs's encounters with Marcus Garvey and resistance to Garvey's campaign for social, economic, and constitutional reform in Jamaica in 1930, see Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, vol. VII November 1927–August 1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 289–414.

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